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City of Bellingham
Planning & Community Development
Planning Division
210 Lottie Street
Bellingham WA 98225

City of Bellingham
Planning

RE: Letter of Intent to update the Sehome Neighborhood Plan

On behalf of the Sehome Neighborhood Association, we hereby submit a Letter of Intent to update the Sehome Neighborhood section of the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan. Our neighborhood plan has not been substantially updated since 1980, and due to the wear of time and changes over the last 27 years, much of the plan is outdated or overlooks important issues. We believe that a plan that addresses the current neighborhood's strengths and issues, and that provides policy and direction for future growth and improvement, will be beneficial to our neighborhood, the downtown core, the university, and the city of Bellingham at large.

Our goals in rewriting our neighborhood plan are to provide a summary of our neighborhood's current strengths and issues, to provide clear policy, to outline goals and objectives for improvements, to remain flexible to future changes, and to be active participants in future development and improvement implementations. As with all "snapshots in time", it would be impossible for us to anticipate what changes might be coming, or to address completely all and every possible implementation of our objectives and goals. And, in addition to the more ordinary neighborhood issues, Sehome is dedicated to working with the City in developing standards and regulations relating to the urban village model development. Since this is one of a few different projects which involve many partners, may involve collecting much more data, and which may involve changes to existing infrastructure or regulations, we anticipate much more work and a few later updates to the neighborhood plan, in particular with regard to the Samish Urban Village, parking issues, and design standards for single-family residences.

A. What Comprehensive Plan goals and policies support the proposed amendment?

Where practical, specific statements from the 2004-2005 Bellingham Comprehensive Plan have been referenced in the Sehome Neighborhood Plan, to support the information. As to *why* the neighborhood has chosen to update their plan, we believe it is our responsibility to provide this information to the City and to participate fully in the process of providing "a safe and secure place to live, an economy that provides jobs, healthy and diverse neighborhoods, choices with respect to ways to get around town, excellent schools, a clean and healthy environment, and extensive and diverse recreational opportunity." (BCP Intro-1) As a partner in this process, we take to heart the statement "Bellingham's neighborhood plans remain critically important to achieving the vision and goals of the comprehensive plan. The plans are powerful tools that help to maintain neighborhood character and define the "vision" of the neighborhood in the future." (BCP Intro-6) After taking a close look at our existing neighborhood plan, we felt that an extensive rewrite was necessary in order to provide current information and support the City's efforts in complying with "Public participation in comprehensive planning processes is required both as a matter of law and policy. The public participation section details the city's commitment to public involvement in the planning process. It reaffirms our intention to develop public planning processes that provide ample opportunity for residents to participate in the decision-making process." (BCP Intro-12)

B. Would the proposed amendment reduce the number of housing units that could be accommodated?

No, the revised Sehome Neighborhood Plan will not reduce the number of housing units that could be accommodated under current zoning and land use regulations. In fact, our wildest desire is to make the Samish Urban Village a reality, and add more housing units than required in the estimated in-filling requirements adopted by the City in 2005 (52 housing units, 84 residents). It is also our hope that by providing clear design guidelines we will attract developers wishing to renovate some of the aging student housing that may not be in compliance with current codes. And because we value our historical roots, we wish to protect, renovate, and even expand the unique historical district, which we expect will add a modest number of housing units.

C. What methods have you used to determine whether those affected by the amendment would support it?

Sehome Neighborhood Association has made every possible effort to contact and encourage every resident, business owner, and property owner in Sehome in soliciting input for this plan, and has made our officers publicly available for any party that wished to discuss the effort. Where significant conflict or uncertainty arose around a given topic, it was excluded from the plan since we could not claim that it had strong support.

History of outreach:

1. 2004-2005: A 60-question survey was mailed to the approximately 2300 mailing addresses available for the neighborhood. Over 300 were completed and returned, and the results formed the foundation for our 2007 plan efforts. We believe the plan to be in accordance with the survey results.
2. March 2007: A four-color flyer was mailed to all residents, businesses and property owners in Sehome announcing the kickoff of the planning process and emphasizing the need for neighborhood input. Attendance was the highest in memory at an SNA meeting, with over 100 people counted over the course of the evening. Attendees were given an overview of the planning process and broke into work groups by area of interest. Group discussion facilitators recorded input, which was consolidated into a single document. Four committees (Historic Preservation, Samish Way Urban Village, Architectural Design Standards, and Transportation) were created or populated by volunteers from the meeting signup sheets.
3. A design charette for the Samish Way Urban Village was attended by over 30 invited stakeholders representing a broad range of interests.
4. All business owners along Samish Way were invited, with approximately 25% attending, to an input session to hear their thoughts on the Samish Way Urban Village.
5. August 2007: An eight-page special edition of the neighborhood newsletter that included a detailed draft of the Transportation section, and articles reflecting the proposed changes related to the other committee works, were delivered door-to-door to every address in Sehome.
6. These were then presented and discussed at the August general membership meeting. Input was gathered and incorporated into the plan.
7. In October, the plan was presented at a general membership meeting and a mailing was sent to each resident, business, and property owner in Sehome that the draft plan was available for comment.
8. Comments were submitted and incorporated into the plan appropriately.

9. The President met with housing affordability advocates to discuss approaches to include the affordability concerns that the neighborhood voiced.
10. The President met with a group of three local architects and two members of Planning to discuss the viability of the proposed approach of the Sehome Architectural Design Standards committee referred to in the plan.
11. Numerous other meetings occurred over the year with assorted stakeholders (including City Planners).
12. Regularly updated information and copies of the draft plan were posted on the neighborhood website (www.sehome.org) for neighbors not able to attend all meetings.

We intend to continue outreach to encourage ongoing discussion of the plan prior to its review by the Planning Commission and the City Council. As input indicates a need, and as the opportunity is provided, we will continue to revise the plan. Changes too late for this year's submission will be recorded for consideration for future amendments.

D. Who is in favor of the proposal?

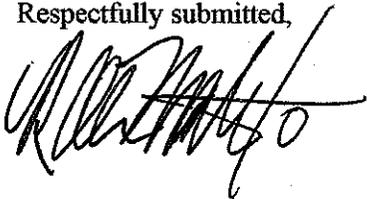
The Sehome Neighborhood Association Board of Directors unanimously supports the submission of the Sehome Neighborhood Plan to the City for consideration of adoption. The Board of Directors feels that the plan accurately reflects the comments, suggestions, and input from the neighbors, collected from public forums, individual comments, and committee outreach efforts.

E. Who is opposed to the proposal and what are their issues?

To the knowledge of the Sehome Neighborhood Association Board of Directors, there is no opposition to this proposal. That is not to say that some of the specific implementations might not meet with some disagreement. For instance, not all residents will be enthusiastic about having more pedestrians traveling on their sidewalks, or more bikes commuting on their streets. However, the Board feels confident that this neighborhood plan makes every effort to be flexible and fair, and that there are no special interest groups who disagree with the contents.

On behalf of the Sehome Neighborhood Association Board of Directors, and on behalf of all the neighbors in the Sehome Neighborhood, we are pleased to submit this revised Sehome Neighborhood Plan for your review and consideration. With this, we are pleased to stand up to our responsibility for providing the City with necessary information about our neighborhood, and our goals and objectives for further progress. We are proud to be part of such an inclusive process, and residents of a City that values the neighborhoods and their contributions to the greater community.

Respectfully submitted,



Allen Matsumoto, President
Charles Dyer, Vice-President
Sehome Neighborhood Association



2007 Sehome Neighborhood Plan

Document Rev 1.0

December 3, 2007

Document History

Version	Date of Change	Person	Notes, Comments, Reasons
0.1	10-11-07	Charley Dyer	First Draft, incorporating v0.5 draft of Transportation committee chapter 3, Architectural Review Committee, and Historic Preservation Committee input. First draft of Land Use chapter
0.2	10/25/07	Allen Matsumoto	Incorporate Samish Way, add vision statement, second draft of Land Use chapter, general review and completion of remaining sections, normalize format except Transportation section.
0.3	10/29/07	Allen Matsumoto, Matt Rose	Housing chapters, addition of Area 1 and Area 6 material from Matt Rose
0.4	10/29/07	Allen Matsumoto	Minor formatting changes; note re: Armory section, Objective and Action numbers updated
0.5am	11/18/07	Allen Matsumoto	Insert support references from neighborhood input,
0.6	12/02/07	Allen Matsumoto	Incorporates Charley Dyer's insertion of comments from C. Koch, Don & Joy Keenan.
0.7	12/02/07	Allen Matsumoto	Same as 0.6, but with all tracked changes accepted.
1.0	12/03/07	Charley Dyer	Last read through and minor decisions added as needed.

Sehome Neighborhood Plan

Introduction

The 2007 Sehome Neighborhood Plan represents the first full review of neighborhood planning priorities in Sehome since the original plan in 1980.

Many people working as volunteers through the Sehome Neighborhood Association or its committees have contributed to the information gathering, analysis, and writing required to produce this plan. The variety of areas within Sehome created a challenge in scope and complexity. While some identified areas of neighborhood planning were not addressed due to time limitations, and will require additional amendments in coming years, it is believed that the recommendations here are the most important and pressing to residents, property owners, and business owners in Sehome.

Allen Matsumoto, President
Sehome Neighborhood Association

Mission Statement

The mission of the Sehome Neighborhood Plan is to summarize the neighborhood's vision of its future, and present the local views and input of the Sehome into the zoning and planning processes of the City of Bellingham, in conformity with the principles laid out in the State of Washington Growth Management Act and the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan.

The plan, in vision and detail, should establish official neighborhood policy in all matters covered by the plan.

In light of the mission of the Sehome Neighborhood Plan, one significant element of the Plan should be the development of methods for obtaining the preferences of Sehome neighbors and, when available, the consensus of the Sehome Neighborhood with regard to planning, zoning, and development within and near Sehome. There are at least three different needs for such input:

- The Plan should include current insights from the residents of Neighborhood regarding current problems and needs of the Neighborhood.
- The Plan should include one or more methods for continuing input from the Neighborhood or designees from the Neighborhood with regard to matters as they arise through the years.
- The Plan should envision patterns of input that will help planners, developers, and individual residents and owners early in their processes of planning so as to help them understand the vision and needs of the Sehome Neighborhood from the start and to minimize expense by avoiding costly predevelopment planning that later has to be changed dramatically.

Chapter 1: Framework and Goals

Part 1: Vision Statement

The Sehome Vision Statement is intended to paint a picture of the Sehome Neighborhood that the neighborhood plan aims to cultivate. In other words, if everything in our plan happened as desired, the result might look something like the Sehome Neighborhood of 2027 described here.

Sehome 2027:

Wrapped between the vibrant Samish Way Urban Center and the commercial/residential area overlooking City Center and the new Waterfront District lays a sleepy piece of the heart of Bellingham – the Sehome Hill National Register Historic District. These three areas may appear to be separate neighborhoods to the uninitiated, but they are bound by a community with a common desire to enjoy the best of contemporary lifestyles without losing touch with the values and character that make Bellingham special.

The Sehome Hill National Register Historic District & surrounding area

Little has changed in the Sehome Hill National Register Historic District since the early 1900's when most of the homes were built. The streets are still narrow, with drivers waiting for oncoming traffic to pass parked cars before proceeding. Between the sidewalks and the street are the hallmark landscaping strips that evoke Bellingham's residential heritage, and with utility wires in the alleyways, one could easily imagine that it is 1927 instead of 2027. Pedestrians and bicyclists taking advantage of the special routes that connect the Sehome Arboretum with the Waterfront District, City Center, and the York Neighborhood enjoy expansive views across the city to the north and west. The occasional modern home in this area blends in comfortably, thanks to careful attention to architectural harmony achieved through a design review process shared by all the historic neighborhoods of the city. Most residents of the Historic District moved here to enjoy the Craftsman, Prairie and Folk Victorian character of the area and have lovingly maintained or restored their homes, many of which are indistinguishable from their photos in "At Home on the Hill," the still-popular volume first published in the 1990's by the Sehome History Group.

About the only real change to the Historic District is its expansion to include the north side of Maple Street, formerly part of the St. Joseph's Hospital parking lot. This two-block by one-lot deep strip was set aside to receive historic homes from around Bellingham that would otherwise be destroyed. Still about half open space, there remains room for a half-dozen more "ghost homes" before it is fully restored to something approximating the original look of Maple Street before dozens of houses were removed for the St. Joseph's lots. One would hardly know these homes were just recently relocated here, because mature maple trees, which once fronted the hospital parking lot, remain in place, providing shade, peace, and beautiful fall color.

Behind this restoration area, building heights increase gradually through the rest of the former parking lot area, into the historically and environmentally sensitive (LEED-certified) multiunit residential zone facing Chestnut Street. Family residents of this redeveloped area enjoy the small park/playground that was built as part of the redevelopment.

Samish Way Urban Center

By contrast, visitors last here 20 years ago might have a difficult time recognizing Samish Way. Gone are the empty expanses of asphalt and distressed buildings that were rumored to have once harbored some of Bellingham's shadier elements. Their owners have long since sold their properties or participated in the redevelopment. After passing the freeway service businesses near Bill McDonald Parkway, visitors instead enter a welcoming gateway to Bellingham, greeted by a tree-lined streetscape with wide sidewalks supporting cafés and window shoppers. The area feels comfortable, bright, and is spotted with small green spaces and public amenities, typical of the LEED-ND standards that guided the development.

That is, they might not recognize the area until they reach Boomer's, Bellingham's landmark drive-in restaurant. One of a handful of businesses in the area that still reflect the days when Samish Way was part of Highway 99, Boomer's may seem a bit kitschy, but it doesn't seem to bother the flocks of neighbors and WWU students happily downing burgers and shakes. In the morning, Historic District denizens stroll down the hill through the tree lined, bike and pedestrian-only causeway (and adjoining dog park) that connects their homes to the Urban Center, for a cup of coffee at one of several cafés and breakfast places. There they join the diverse mix of residents from the condos and apartments above as they start their day. Casual lunchtime spots are filled with students (many enjoying the tree-lined bike paths safely separated from Samish Way car traffic) and businesspeople alike. Business is brisk all day, with a diverse mix of retail and professional services complementing each other. In the evening, the neon signs of the nightspots infuse the near-trendy area with an atmosphere of fun that draws families as well as the young professionals and WWU faculty that live above. Those who come to enjoy the amenities from other parts of town usually find parking not far from their destination in the long, well-lit lot that runs the length of the Urban Center next to I-5. Bus riders enjoy Diego's free wi-fi that extends to the mini-parklike green space that houses the Blue Line bus stop in front of the center, one of several up and down "The Way."

Along the southwest edge of the Urban Center, the three- to five-story buildings facing Samish Way taper down to cottage homes on 34th Street, facing the well-treed park-like expanses of the quarter-acre lots there, which back up to the Historic District and the Sehome Arboretum above.

The West Side and Armory District

Residents of the many apartments and condominiums along the west side of Sehome have their choice of Samish Way, the Waterfront District, or City Center for walkable places to work or play (though many are students at nearby WWU). Some don't even need to leave Sehome though, and may step right next door to one of the many professional offices built before the area was zoned to multiunit residential. (A special Historic Neighborhood appendix to the city's multiunit design guidelines ensured that new development, while clearly not imitative of historic styles, fit in through consistent use of the historic design vocabulary.) A few particularly fortunate ones benefit from the foresight of city leaders who moved to help preserve many of the historic homes along this area, most of which now see service as offices or office/residence combinations. These reminders of Bellingham's rich heritage are pleasant islands of grass, trees, and charm.

When the neighborhood decided to focus residential infill density on Samish Way and the St. Joseph's parking lot areas, significant pressure was relieved from this side of Sehome, allowing

critical time and breathing room for city leaders and Sehome residents to develop creative ways to preserve these homes, and avoid excessively tall buildings in the area that would have blocked long-treasured views for the neighborhood above. Areas with high proportions of residential use and low numbers of commercial buildings enjoy vegetative buffers and safe pedestrian access across the arterial streets that move much of the downtown business traffic north and south. Commercial lights and streetlights are positioned and shaded to avoid harsh nighttime glare in these areas, as part of the “Good Neighbor” policy that the city developed in conjunction with neighborhoods with mixed-use areas.

One of the highest concentrations of these homes is in the Armory District, created to preserve the 1910 National Guard Armory, a once-neglected castle of local Chuckanut Sandstone facing Boulevard Park on State Street. So damaged by water that it had become a tempting target for teardown, local residents instead worked with the city, WWU, and local developers to craft a preservation strategy that began with a core preservation area and eventually became the mix of large historic homes, historically sensitive commercial and multiunit development, and dramatic views that compose one of Bellingham’s brightest features.

Together, these three areas – a modern Urban Center designed around the activities of the people who live here, a quiet hillside of homes from another era housing working families, and an eclectic mix of past and future, business and high-density housing – comprise Sehome in 2027.

Part 2: Past and Present

Sehome is one of Bellingham's older neighborhoods. Much of the area is within the former Town of Sehome, one of several towns that consolidated near the turn of the century to become the City of Bellingham. In 1980, over 80 percent of the housing in the Sehome Neighborhood was over 20 years old, and much of it over 50 years old. With approximately 90 percent of the neighborhood reported to be developed at that time, and 27 years added to the age of all that has not been replaced, the majority of Sehome housing stock is now over 47 years old.

There are many houses of historical value in the older residential part of the neighborhood, including some large, architecturally impressive examples located mostly near the foot of the hill and along the westerly view areas on Jersey Street. The Sehome Hill National Historic District encompasses older homes south of Maple, north of the Sehome Hill Arboretum. With few exceptions, residential areas have mature landscaping and there are several tree-lined arterials, which are highly valued by the residents. Being one of the city's older and more centrally located residential neighborhoods, the population density is among the highest of the city's neighborhoods, second only to Western Washington University. Over 3000 people reside in the neighborhood in a mix of single and multiunit structures.

The 165-acre Sehome Hill Arboretum is a prominent open space/natural area that defines the southern and western borders of the neighborhood. It is owned and managed jointly by Western Washington University and the City of Bellingham and includes walking trails and dramatic views of Bellingham Bay.

In addition to the Arboretum, Sehome includes two largely undeveloped public areas adjacent to the Arboretum (Area 10), and two small parks, Laurel Park and Forest & Cedar Park (Areas 8 and 6, respectively). The latter two are neighborhood parks that feature playgrounds, half court basketball, and open lawn areas for informal play.

Being one of the city's older and more centrally located residential neighborhoods, approximately 89 percent of the neighborhood (excluding Area 10 adjacent to the Sehome Arboretum) is developed. Sehome's high population density is due to small (55 x 125) single family lots and the zoning of about 48 percent of Sehome's developable area as high-density multi-unit housing and to the conversion of many of the larger old homes close to Western Washington University into boarding houses and apartments. There are almost 150 multifamily structures in the neighborhood, but approximately 43% of these are three units or less. These are mostly older homes with boarders or which have been converted to apartments. There are approximately 30 apartments with nine or more units. These vary in age, and many are located in the northwestern part of the neighborhood, to capitalize on the views over Bellingham Bay.

Being one of the city's more "urbanized" residential neighborhoods, Sehome is also relatively well off as far as public utilities are concerned. Streets, sanitary sewers, storm sewers, and water lines were provided in the early 1900's. Trunk lines for the underground utilities have been upgraded over the years, and they are generally in good condition. Most of the streets are concrete with curbs, gutters and sidewalks. Where sidewalks are absent, residents largely prefer it that way. Streets are in good condition, though many are narrower than today's standards would allow, another condition that is appreciated by most residents. The critical arterial streets have been widened over the years, but most of the residential streets are 18 to 24 feet wide from curb-to-curb. This information is documented for part of the neighborhood in the Northeast Sehome Hill Area report (1970).

With parking allowed on one side of the street, many streets in the neighborhood are not wide enough for two cars to pass each other. This is generally perceived as an asset by residents, because it slows traffic on those residential streets.

The Sehome Neighborhood has a mix of types of housing and businesses. Many single-family residences remain in the areas zoned for multi-family use, though many of those are used as multi-unit rentals. There are also large and medium-sized apartment buildings and some condominiums. In addition to long-term renters, Sehome's proximity to Western Washington University makes it home to a large number of college students whose connection to the community is more transient. Most of the business uses are along the arterial streets State, Forest, Holly, Ellis, and Samish Way, and the short segment of Maple Street connecting Samish Way to Ellis.

Neighborhood character

The original Scandinavian millworker homes built on the north side of Sehome Hill between 1890 and 1930 continue to represent the character of Sehome in the perceptions of many inside and outside the neighborhood. *At Home on the Hill*, an extensive historical album of this area was published by the Sehome History Group, and is available for purchase at local retail book outlets.

Its physical location on Sehome Hill is a big part of the Sehome Neighborhood's character. Sehome Hill is a steep bedrock formation rising 650 feet from Bellingham Bay with a northeasterly bearing series of ridges reflecting the underlying rock formations. While there are relatively level "bench" areas without views, much of this neighborhood has excellent views of Bellingham and the Canadian mountains to the north, over Bellingham Bay, or toward Mount Baker in the east.

Parts of those historic areas on the west side of Sehome were rezoned from single-family to multi-unit residential, resulting in the development of a number of apartment buildings that largely reflected low-cost housing architecture of that era. The loss of historic homes and dramatic change in neighborhood character brought about by this produced a strong negative reaction from Sehome residents. Blocks along the eastern edge of this multi-unit zoned area, were consequently re-zoned back to single-family status, though some multi-unit buildings had already been built there and exist today as non-conforming. Historic single-family homes also still exist in the remaining multi-unit areas, and it is a significant goal of the Sehome Neighborhood Association to preserve those if possible.

In 2001, a contiguous block of 153 homes was designated as the Sehome Hill Historic District by the National Register of Historic Places and the Washington Heritage Register.

The north and west borders of the neighborhood are principally commercial development, which has evolved over the years to match typical commercial development patterns in Bellingham. To the east, Samish Way, which had historical use as Highway 99, was later zoned to support auto and commercial businesses. Development along Samish Way north of Consolidation has lagged and created an environment that many have cited as a candidate for redevelopment or renewal.

The southern border of the neighborhood is largely dominated by the Sehome Arboretum and Western Washington University campus, with a few blocks of historic single-family homes that have remained despite multi-family zoning.

With the formation of the Sehome Arboretum, the neighborhood gained a significant neighboring green space, which is highly valued for the impact on aesthetics, recreational opportunities, and property values in the surrounding areas.

Development patterns

With approximately 90% of Sehome developed at the time of the 1980 Neighborhood Plan, development patterns were largely established along the lines described in Neighborhood Character, above. One historic home in Area 7 adjacent to Laurel Park was relocated to the York neighborhood in 2006 to accommodate development of an 18-unit luxury condominium, illustrating the natural evolution of that area implied by the current multi-unit zoning.

Strengths and weaknesses

The historic aspect of Sehome, along with the other historic core neighborhoods such as South Hill, Lettered Streets, York, Cornwall, Columbia, South Hill, and Sunnyland, contributes to a treasured aspect of Bellingham as a city.

The Sehome Arboretum, shared with other bordering neighborhoods, is an extraordinary green space asset to the neighborhood and the city.

The multi-unit housing that exists along the west side of the neighborhood contributes significantly to Bellingham's overall housing stock, including units that are relatively affordable. If adequate parking impact mitigation can be developed, some of the two-story multi-family units could be increased in height, adding units in close proximity to WWU without adversely impacting views due to the steep slope.

Samish Way produces a significant portion of the crime reports in Sehome, and the large expanses of asphalt parking areas contribute to polluting storm water runoff. Pedestrians and bicyclists tend to avoid the street, limiting walk-in businesses in the area to some degree.

Many homes in the single-family areas of Sehome have been converted for use by, and are rented to, multiple unrelated adults, compromising the character that is the intent of single-family zoning by creating traffic and parking density not intended in single-family areas, as well as an increased level of occasional noise and nuisance issues.

Part 3: Broad goal statements for future

This section includes general goals of the Sehome Neighborhood that are supported in greater detail elsewhere in the Neighborhood Plan and that represent the greatest priorities for the neighborhood.

Preserve and restore historic character

While recognizing the value of evolving character in a community, Sehome residents in the historic areas feel strongly that preservation of historic character in specific areas is vital for many reasons, including aesthetics, property values, and continuity critical to community building. In re-zoning some of the multi-unit areas to single-family, the neighborhood showed a strong, clear preference for the historic nature of Sehome. These attitudes still prevail.

To this end, the preservation of historic housing stock is a key pillar of the effort to preserve and restore historic character in Sehome.

Historic single-family homes remaining in the multi-family zoned areas are seen as in danger of being replaced by new multi-unit housing stock, which would have the effect of further degrading the historic character. Because the current legal status of those homes affords them and the neighborhood no protection in this regard, the neighborhood strongly feels that solutions to protect them are needed. Proposals made by the neighborhood in the future could include ideas such as special status protection as individual properties in situ, special zoning consideration, or support for relocation of those homes within Sehome in the case that the owners choose to redevelop the property.

High design standards for new development

Because Sehome is largely developed, new building is expected to take the form of either multi-unit residential structures within the parts of the historic area of Sehome that were rezoned as multi-family, or in the form of mixed redevelopment along the east, north, and west boundaries of the neighborhood.

While overly-prescriptive design standards are not desired, being an impediment to architectural creativity and development flexibility, different parts of Sehome should reflect certain general guidelines:

- Multi-unit structures built within the current (2007) multi-family zoned areas of Sehome should carefully honor the intent of the Bellingham Multiunit Design Guidelines in regard to reflecting the character of the surrounding neighborhood. Specifically, the proximity of structures built in post-WWII architectural styles, which created strong

negative response from the neighborhood when they were built (see Part 2, Neighborhood Character), should not be considered precedence for propagating those architectural styles further. In support of this effort, Sehome will be submitting an appendix to the Bellingham Multiunit Design Guidelines, clarifying the application of those guidelines within Sehome by use of a visual inventory of prototypes.

- Commercial development along Samish Way should conform to design standards that emerge from a public master planning process for the Samish Way Urban Center.
- Commercial development along the north and west boundaries of the neighborhood should reflect compliance with the general prototype guidelines referenced in the Neighborhood Design Goals section.

Focus infill outside of the original Sehome residential area

The Samish Way Urban Center, and other multi-unit housing opportunities outside the original residential areas of Sehome, should be the principle focus for infill efforts in Sehome. Through means including, but not limited to, tax and other development incentives, efforts should be made to strongly encourage new infill to take place without replacing historic housing stock, preferably in areas that are in need of renewal.

This would represent a significant change in the direction that current zoning, if left unmodified, would take development, in which Indian, High, and Garden Streets are likely to continue to lose historic housing stock to multi-unit development. All reasonable efforts should be made to direct infill into areas of Sehome in which the infill would represent an improvement in neighborhood character by replacing aging or distressed commercial properties.

Chapter 2: Land Use and Maps

Part 1: Sub-area descriptions

Area 1

This is a relatively steep hillside area facing Bellingham Bay. The predominant land use is single family with over 70% of the residential structures single-family homes blended in with multi-family structures. This is one of the older parts of the Sehome Neighborhood, and there are several large, old Craftsman style houses. Since 2000, the rise in view property values has resulted in higher-end condominium development and single-family Craftsman house refurbishment.

Multi-family

Apartments exist along Garden Street and the 600 block of N. State to capitalize on the outstanding view. A few larger, old houses were converted to multi-family student housing during the 1970's and 1980's and range from well-maintained to dilapidated. There are a few 1970's designed multi-family dwellings. Since 2000, higher end view condominiums have been built on the 500 & 600 block of N. State and above Boulevard replacing dilapidated homes or empty lots.

Area 1 is home to the 1910 National Guard Armory, an endangered building of particular historic value to Bellingham. Please see Chapter 7, Neighborhood Design, for analysis and recommendations regarding this property.

Single-family

Many of the craftsman houses in the 500 & 600 block of N. Forest and N. State have been refurbished and more families have moved into the area. Student multi-family type housing has been diminishing as structures are reconverted to single-family or demolished for condominium construction. There has been interest expressed in developing a historical district in cooperation with the Garden St., Forest St., and State St. portion of the South Hill neighborhood.

Over ten percent of the structures—mostly older single-family homes—are in dilapidated condition or in need of major repair.

Area 1 Land Use Designation: Multi-family Residential, High Density

Area 2

As is most of Sehome Neighborhood, this area is on a hillside, with relatively level benches broken by steep hillside areas. About 38 percent of this area is still single family with approximately 12 percent duplexes or room/board housing, 16 percent in apartments of three or more units, and 11 percent in condominium use. There is one 16-unit apartment on Indian. A small but visible portion of the housing in this area is in dilapidated condition or in need of major repairs. Some of the neighborhood's older structures are in this area. There are buildings of historical and architectural significance within this area.

District 2 of the WWU Institutional Master Plan is in Area 2. That Master Plan includes recommendations to rezone District 2 to Institutional from Residential Multi after the Sehome Neighborhood Plan is updated. The Sehome Neighborhood has not considered the potential impact of such a rezone, and will amend this portion of the Neighborhood Plan after conducting discussions with WWU to clarify a common vision for this area.

Area 2 Land Use Designation: Multi-family Residential, High Density

Area 3

This is a generally level area, with steep hillside on its southern portion. The area is used primarily for commercial and semi-commercial purposes now. (There are residential units on the second floor of one building.) The property is on State Street and includes most of the area around the State/Boulevard/Ivy intersection.

The intersection of State and Ivy streets presents safety challenges for bicyclists and others traveling between the neighborhood and Boulevard Street or the Wharf Street access to Greenways trails and Boulevard Park. Please see Chapter 3, Transportation, for analysis and recommendations regarding this area and intersection.

Area 3 Land Use Designation: Commercial

Area 4

This is a long, narrow strip half a block wide along both State and Holly Streets. Existing uses are predominantly commercial, with several auto oriented commercial uses along both these streets. Both streets are also major traffic corridors feeding into Bellingham's Central Business District. Recent updates to Holly Street in this area have significantly improved the appearance of this gateway to downtown.

Area 4 Land Use Designation: Commercial

Area 5

The two and a half square block area along Forest Street from Laurel north to Area 4 is a moderately sloping hillside facing Bellingham Bay. There are presently scattered offices—primarily medical and dental health care related uses—as well as several public or semi-public buildings. These make up approximately 47% of the uses of the area. About 11% of the uses in the area are single family residences—mostly older homes in fair condition. (In the 1980 Sehome Neighborhood Plan, this figure was expressed as “Half.”) The remaining uses are multi-unit residences. Structures of historical significance have been identified within this area. The height limit is 45 feet.

Area 5 Land Use Designation: Multi-family Residential, High Density

Area 6

This half block area comprises the Forest & Cedar Park. See Chapter 8: Parks, Recreation and Open Space for description, analysis, objectives, and implementation priorities.

Area 6 Land Use Designation: Public.**Area 7**

This is an area four blocks long and one half block deep on either side of High Street from Chestnut Street to Ivy Street. There are approximately 127 multi-family units and 44 single-family residences within the area, mostly in good condition. There is a break in topography along the northern boundary of the area, which is capitalized on by apartments of varying sizes, age and condition. High Street is 22 and 24 feet wide with parking allowed on one side. There is extensive on-street parking in this area.

Some residents have suggested that the Residential Parking Zone (RPZ) be extended to include this area. Recognizing that multi-family zoned areas present additional complexities for RPZ implementation, the Sehome Neighborhood Association will conduct a survey of residents and landlords, and work with the City to determine other potential impacts, prior to making any formal recommendation or request.

The 1100 block of High Street between Maple and Chestnut Streets is primarily single-family residential units, although many houses are currently used as multi-unit student rentals. Development like the other blocks within Area 7 has not occurred. Some Sehome residents believe the area should be considered for historic district status and/or other zoning changes that would preserve the historic houses in this area. The Sehome Neighborhood Association will review such proposals with residents and owners within the block and surrounding properties and make a recommendation if consensus exists.

Area 7 Land Use Designation: Multi-family Residential, High Density**Area 8**

This is a half block sized city park, known as Laurel Park. It is a level grassy area with some playground equipment. See Chapter 8: Parks, Recreation and Open Space for description, analysis, objectives, and implementation priorities.

Area 8 Land Use Designation: Public.**Area 9**

This is a relatively level area which includes St. Joseph's Hospital's South Campus, the Chestnut Medical Center, KVOS television station, four office/commercial uses, approximately 15 single family residences and one building with more than one living unit—mostly old houses converted to duplexes. Chestnut Street bisects this area. All other streets are fully developed narrow residential streets.

St. Joseph's Hospital has long range plans to divest itself of the South Campus and the Chestnut Medical Center. There is considerable concern among Sehome residents as to the ultimate use of this large area. The Sehome Neighborhood Association has had positive discussions with hospital administration officials and hopes to work with the city and the hospital to explore St. Joseph's plans and the neighborhood wishes for the use of this property to find a mutually

acceptable vision. In particular, residents of the Sehome Hill Historic District want to insure that there is a reasonable transition between any new development and the District.

A few houses in Area 9 along Key Street are within the Sehome Hill Historic District.

Area 9 Land Use Designation: Multi-family Residential, High Density

Area 10

Owned by Western Washington University and the City of Bellingham, this area is primarily steep undeveloped land. The area consists of a large area at the south ends of High Street through Mason Street, and a smaller separate area to the east, at the northwest end of 33rd Street, and is used for arboretum and park purposes.

District 1 of the WWU Institutional Master Plan is in Area 10, and it includes some parking lots. The WWU Institutional Master Plan includes recommendations to rezone District 1 to Institutional from Residential Multi after the Sehome Neighborhood Plan is updated. The Sehome Neighborhood has not considered the potential impact of such a rezone, and will amend this portion of the Neighborhood Plan after conducting discussions with WWU to clarify a common vision for this area.

Area 10 also includes part of the Sehome Arboretum, which is used by residents of Sehome and the rest of the city. It is vital to the neighborhood that the undeveloped parts of this area outside of WWU District 1 remain undeveloped greenspace and a component of the Arboretum in perpetuity.

Area 10 Land Use Designation: Public

Area 11

On the northeasterly slope of Sehome Hill, this area has excellent view to the north and east over most of Bellingham and the surrounding foothills and mountains. Sehome Hill Arboretum/Park abuts the area on the uphill side. The area is separated from high-density uses to the northwest by a sharp break in topography. The area is 95 percent single-family homes—mostly older, but in good condition. As an exception to other areas in the Sehome Neighborhood, the multi-unit structures are generally newer buildings built as duplexes or apartments, rather than old houses converted to apartments.

A significant portion of Area 11 has been designated as the Sehome Hill National Register Historic District.

Area 11 Land Use Designation: Single-Family Residential, Medium Density.

Area 12

This area includes the lots on the north side of Maple Street between Key Street and Ellis Street, except for those lots that face Ellis. Homes in this area still reflect the historic character of the neighborhood, in contrast to the commercial areas to the north and to the east on Maple Street. Gradual zoning transitions lead to this stretch of Maple Street, buffering the more

intensive office or multi-unit uses to the north. It also marks the gateway to the pedestrian/bike dominated route from the urban center to the city center.

All of the properties within Area 12 are a part of the Sehome Hill Historic District.

Area 12 Land Use Designation: Multi-family Residential, High Density

Area 13

This area includes the Bellingham Fire Department's Maple Street Station.

Area 13 Land Use Designation: Public.

Area 14

This area is atypical of the residential areas in the Sehome Neighborhood in that the density is zoned as single-family with four units to the acre, creating large, often treed lots. Development predominantly consists of single-family residences, although there is part of a trailer court within the area. The existing homes are also newer than in other parts of the neighborhood. The undeveloped area is a very steep part of Sehome Hill with shallow soils over the sedimentary bedrock. There are significant drainage problems in this area, and recent development on the steep slopes at the top of the area created drainage issues for neighbors below. On the other side of this secluded neighborhood is Samish Way with its commercial development. Access to this area is off Samish Way via Otis, Abbott or Consolidation

Laurel Street also connects with Otis, providing a circuitous route out of the area on narrow residential streets. These are all either narrow residential streets which should not be widened, or are substandard streets with poor intersections with Samish Way.

Thirty-Fourth Street provides a major pedestrian corridor from the Sehome Neighborhood to the Sehome Village commercial area across Bill McDonald Parkway. Currently without sidewalks, pedestrian and car traffic share the roadbed without significant reported conflict. If future development significantly increases traffic on 34th Street, improvements may be necessary to provide pedestrian safety.

Neighborhood volunteers built the pedestrian trail with City support between Myrtle and 34th.

Area 14 Land Use Designation: Single-Family Residential, Low Density.

Area 15

This is a small area along Otis Street and on the western side of the north end of 34th Street. It is on a gently sloping hillside facing Samish Way. There is presently one 31 unit apartment, managed by the Housing Authority, a duplex, part of a trailer court, and nine single-family houses. All are in good condition and are of varying ages.

This area is within the area of interest for the Samish Way Urban Center. Future master planning efforts for Samish Way may include changes to this area, including underlying zoning.

Area 15 Land Use Designation: Multi-family Residential, High Density.

Area 16

This area along Samish Way is currently zoned Auto Commercial. Recent development at the Bill McDonald Parkway end supports national franchise-style auto businesses, many presumably with long-term leases. The area from approximately Consolidation north to Maple Street and east on Maple to Ellis is largely occupied by hotels, restaurants, and other Auto Commercial oriented businesses that are independent or local in ownership.

Large expanses of single-owner use asphalt parking lots characterize the area around Samish Way, frequently under-utilized or nearly empty.

The Auto Commercial strip includes Area 8 of the York Neighborhood, and borders on the south end of Area 5 of York, which is single-family residential.

Samish Way is currently listed in the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan as a Tier 4 Neighborhood Urban Center. The precise boundaries of the Urban Center are not designated, in order to allow site-sensitive master planning.

The Sehome Neighborhood Association is presently working with the all stakeholder groups including residents, businesses, property owners, the City, and surrounding neighborhoods (most significantly, the York Neighborhood Association) to develop a consensus vision for Area 16 as the Samish Way Urban Center.

Any related and coordinated changes to land use in York to support the Samish Way Urban Center will be proposed by the York Neighborhood Association. While Sehome policy stated here incorporates input from significant outreach with York Neighborhood and surrounding areas, and is believed to be consistent with the desires of the York Neighborhood, such policy is proposed exclusively for the Sehome portions of the area of interest. Every effort will be made going forward to draft a consensus master plan with the York Neighborhood and other stakeholders.

Area 16 Land Use Designation: Auto Commercial.

Part 3 Analysis and Objectives for land use

Analysis

Zoning in Sehome currently supports continued removal of historic single-family homes on the west side of the neighborhood in favor of multi-family infill, while prohibiting residential infill in the Auto Commercial zone of Area 16, which almost unanimously is considered to be a good candidate for redevelopment. The St. Joseph parking lots between Maple and Chestnut are also zoned to accept high density infill, and currently it is expected that the hospital will be moving operations to the north and likely selling these properties, opening them to development.

Area 14, which lies between the proposed Samish Way Urban Center and the Arboretum, is zoned single-family residential, and represents unusually large lot size for an area in this proximity to the Downtown core and the Samish Way area. Area 4 has been considered and

treated as an extension of the Downtown Business District by the city in the past, and commercial development in that area matches typical patterns throughout Bellingham.

The neighborhood needs to conduct research to better understand the current zoning status of Area 5, which is zoned for multi-unit residential use with a multiple, mixed use qualifier that allows offices. Views and the residential character of Garden Street above are of great importance to those residents, and if current zoning permits use that would negatively impact those, the Neighborhood may propose future amendments or zoning changes in that area.

Land Use & Zoning Objectives (LUZOs)

- LUZO-1: The original residential areas of Sehome, many of which are now zoned for multi-family use (some with commercial), contain endangered historic housing stock. Encourage prioritization of infill development to occur in other areas (except as noted in LUZO-7), especially where such development would provide positive renewal and improvement in the aesthetic character and environmental protection of the redeveloped area.
- LUZO-2: Any new development that occurs in Sehome, including but not limited to the St. Joseph's parking lot area or the Samish Way Urban Center should transition down to uses, building sizes, and landscape character that are in harmony with surrounding residential areas of the neighborhood.
- LUZO-3: Environmental impact of development in Sehome should be mitigated through sustainable building practices.
- LUZO-4: Development in Area 4 should continue to reflect the City Center Master Plan where it faces downtown, while blending appropriately with the residential uses in Areas 2 and 5 to provide an effective transition between the areas without abrupt changes in character that negatively affect either area.
- LUZO-5: Parking use on residential Sehome streets should be prioritized for the use of the residents of those blocks.
- LUZO-6: The city and neighborhood should work on creative solutions to provide view preservation.
- LUZO-7: Where sufficient mitigations for parking impact can be resolved, and slopes allow additional height without view impingement, encouragement should be given to adding infill density through redevelopment of current multifamily housing stock, especially that which is out of accordance with the pre-war historic character of the neighborhood.

Part 4: Prioritized implementation strategy

The Sehome Neighborhood has devised several concurrent strategies that, working in tandem, would enable the City to meet infill needs, create development that would enhance the community, and preserve the historic nature of the Sehome Neighborhood. The city should take the following actions:

Land Use & Zoning Actions (LUZAs)

- LUZA-1: The city should support the development of the Samish Way Urban Center by actions listed below in *Special Samish Way Urban Center land use & zoning actions*.
- LUZA-2: The city should work with the neighborhood to consider possible land use/zoning solutions to the preservation of historical housing stock in areas currently zoned for multi-family use, such as Garden Street.
- LUZA-3: Development adjacent to single-family residential areas of the neighborhood should include appropriately scaled housing to support an effective transition, with strong preference given to single-family residential component facing the existing housing.
- LUZA-4: The city should relieve infill pressure on the original single-family residential areas of the neighborhood by pursuing the actions listed under *Special Samish Way Urban Center land use and zoning actions*, below, and allow lower density land use in exchange for the neighborhood's proactive pursuit of additional infill land use.
- LUZA-5: The city should facilitate communication and planning between St. Joseph's Hospital and the neighborhood to explore the future of the parking lots north of Maple Street. These discussions should include, but not be limited to, master planning of the area, a relocation zone for historic homes, and potential rezoning to help restore the original single-family character of part or all of this area of the neighborhood.
- LUZA-6: When adequate support is shown through canvassing, surveys, or other mechanisms deemed reliable to measure localized sentiment, Residential Parking Zones, similar to that in Area 11, should be created or expanded. Current areas of Sehome that have expressed a desire for RPZs include Area 7 and Area 1.
- LUZA-7: The Planned Commercial District in Area 3 (Smith Cleaners), Ordinance No. 8925, should be re-evaluated by the city in conjunction with the Neighborhood to determine appropriateness.
- LUZA-8: Access to commercial or multi-unit residential structures should, wherever possible, be consolidated and should minimize impact on adjacent residential areas. Maple Street, especially, should have minimal direct access to development in Area 9, since it is narrow and serves as a sub-collector for the single-family area (Area 11) to the southwest.
- LUZA-9: Green building practices such as those required for LEED certification should be encouraged through the use of incentives and, where possible, regulation.
- LUZA-10: The following section regarding Area 7 is from the 1980 plan and has not been thoroughly reviewed. Pending future amendments, and to the degree that they are still relevant and legal, these items should be considered to remain a part of the Sehome Neighborhood Plan.

All items relate to Area 7 only:

Development occurring at a density of 2,000 square feet per unit need not be reviewed through a discretionary process if all requirements of the Residential Multi

regulations are met. Views are of significant value in this area; therefore, environmental review requirements applying to view impacts should be met.

Boarding and rooming houses shall provide one parking space per bedroom to help alleviate on-street parking problems. This requirement can be imposed either through site plan or conditional use review.

- A. Development occurring at a density between 2,000 and 1,000 square feet per unit can be accommodated in this area if reviewed through the planned process. The following issues should be addressed during this process:
- B. Parking on lawns should be prohibited and enforcement should occur on a regular basis.
- C. Existing curb cuts should be closed when possible and alley access encouraged.
- D. More on-site parking can be accommodated by increasing the percentage of compact spaces which may be provided to 50% and eliminating the five foot landscaped strip required between parking areas and property lines. The maximum number of parking spaces possible should be provided on-site.
- E. Whenever an increase in the number of units is requested for an existing building, which does not presently provide adequate parking, additional parking should be required to meet full code requirements for the entire building.
- F. Given the ownership patterns and lot sizes, flexibility should also be granted from the standard Planned Residential setbacks. This can be achieved by using Residential Multi setback r requirements during the planned review process.
- G. Building heights should be limited to 35 feet for height definition No. 1 and 20 feet for definition No. 2. While not eliminating potential negative impacts on view, this limitation should not further exacerbate the problem.

Special Samish Way Urban Center land use & zoning actions

- LUZASW-1: The Samish Way Urban Center should be promoted from Tier 4 status in the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan to Tier 2, to permit necessary city resources to be brought to bear on the Urban Center effort.
- LUZASW-2: A master planning effort should be undertaken by the city in partnership with the affected neighborhoods, to define regulatory changes, development patterns, and architectural design standards necessary to support the development of the Samish Way Urban Center.
- LUZASW-3: The results of the Samish Way Committee outreach efforts to date, including all stakeholder input expressed, should be incorporated into, and play a formative role in, the master planning process.
- LUZASW-4: Zoning, including form-based zoning, should be changed to support the master plan when complete. Such zoning would likely include, but not be limited to, rezoning of Area 16 from Auto Commercial to Mixed Use, Planned or other

designation, to accommodate the mix of residential, retail, and other uses not currently allowed but included in the consensus Urban Center master plan.

- LUZASW-5: The city should consider formation of a special pilot project to encourage the redevelopment of Samish Way as an Urban Center and to test progressive exceptions to standard city regulations and permitting processes. Such exceptions would be detailed in the Samish Way Urban Center Master Plan following consensus of approval of all stakeholder groups in the drafting of that plan.
- LUZASW-6 The Samish Way Urban Center should be re-designated in the Comprehensive Plan from Neighborhood Urban Center to District Urban Center to reflect its potential size, infill capacity, and utility to the entire city.
- LUZASW-7 The highest priority of the master plan should be appropriate transition areas protecting surrounding residential use from inappropriate or intrusive commercial or high-density residential use out of scale and/or character with those residential areas.

Maps

See the Land Use and Zoning Maps at the back of the Plan.

Chapter 3: Transportation

Part 1 Existing Streets, Pedestrian, and Bicycle Routes

For this chapter, presume the word “Street” behind the many streets named below, unless otherwise designated.

Quick Profile Overview

- Historical neighborhood with dense population and narrow residential streets.
- Contains many of the City’s main arterials with through-traffic to Downtown Core, Lake Whatcom, and Samish Way/Old Hwy 99.
- Safety issues of great concern due to the high volume of various types of traffic sharing the same roadways (through-traffic cars using the arterials, commuting cars, and residential and commuting pedestrians and bicycles).
- Neighborhood already has a high volume of pedestrian and bicycle traffic commuting to the University and Downtown Core, but wishes to build upon the existing traffic by improving the safety and usability of these non-motorized transportation routes.
- Neighborhood wishes to preserve or improve the livability of residents who might be adversely impacted by increasing traffic and increasing density, changes to downtown and arterial routes, and increasing volume of through-traffic.

Sehome Neighborhood is one of Bellingham’s oldest neighborhoods, and residents strongly believe its historic importance and character, arboretum, old established trees and greenbelts should be preserved and protected. (Ref 1) Historically, Sehome has primarily been a residential neighborhood with narrow streets for residential access. Many of these narrow streets remain, especially within the designated Historical District, with the exception of the arterials, secondary, and collector routes established by widening streets to multiple lanes. Where the original borders of Whatcom and Sehome towns meet, streets meet at odd angles.

Many of the large old mansions remain single-family, but many have been converted to student housing. This contributes to Sehome being one of the most densely populated neighborhoods in Bellingham. Sehome Neighborhood has an anticipated growth of 52 new housing units (population 84) to meet growth and infill expectations. However, the Downtown Core is targeted for an increase of 1,321 housing units, and the Waterfront District is targeted for another 1,225 housing units. (Ref 2) This will dramatically increase the through-traffic routed east/west along Holly and Chestnut Streets, and north/south along Ellis/E. Maple/Samish Way, Forest, and State.

Because Sehome lies in the path of some of Bellingham’s main traffic routes to and from the downtown core district, its streets are heavily used by through traffic. Lakeway connects to Interstate 5 and east-lying neighborhoods. Samish Way feeds four lanes of traffic to and from the south, including traffic from a southern Interstate 5 off ramp. (This section was part of the old Hwy. 99.) In order to effectively route such large volumes of through traffic, the City has established two one-way couplets, Chestnut/Holly and State/Forest, widening Chestnut and

Forest from their original narrow profile to three lanes each. Ellis/E. Maple/Samish Way remains a primary arterial with four lanes of two-way traffic.

Western Washington University is located directly adjacent to Sehome at the south border of the Neighborhood, and most northerly commuter traffic to and from the University passes through Sehome. In order to provide better access to the University, Garden, Indian, and Bill McDonald Parkway were widened and improved to become secondary or collector arterials.

Specific Arterial Street Designations

(Five) Principal Arterial Streets: Samish Way/E. Maple/Ellis; E. Holly; Chestnut; Boulevard; Forest

(Two) Secondary Arterial Streets: Bill McDonald Parkway; Garden

(One) Collector Street: Indian (Ref 3)

In order to preserve its residential-friendly character and discourage through traffic shortcuts, non-arterial streets remain narrow. Due to the dense population and commuter traffic, speeding and parking issues can be a problem, especially close to the University. Although data is largely local residential observation, there is an overall perception that impatient traffic, particularly along routes to the University and the Downtown Core (especially along High, Indian, and Maple) is increasing. Traffic accidents and offences generate about 11% to 16% of neighborhood complaints to the police department, next only after public order maintenance and service call complaints. (Ref 4)

Sehome has only one designated bicycle lane, which is located along the west side of Indian from Chestnut to High, ending at the edge of the University. There is a north-bound bicycle lane along Boulevard, but it ends right at Wharf without a crossing to the Boulevard interurban trail or any other north-bound bicycle routes. The City has budgeted and scheduled for resurfacing Forest in 2009, and plans to reduce traffic lanes to two (from three) and add a bicycle lane. Specific design and the location of connections to other inter-urban bicycle routes will be determined by the City at a later date. (We anticipate that this new north-bound bicycle lane along Forest will provide the needed route to the Downtown Core and connect to other bicycle routes. We also anticipate street changes will be similar to those made in 2002 to State Street.) Although Sehome currently has no established pedestrian and few bicycle pathways separated from car traffic, the proximity of the University and the Downtown Core has contributed to a large number of pedestrian and bicycle commuters, primarily along Forest, Garden, High, Indian, Jersey, 34th, Myrtle, Laurel, Maple, Chestnut, and Holly streets. Building upon its current use, Sehome wishes to encourage and increase non-motorized transportation routes through its streets in order to preserve the historic character of the Neighborhood, reduce noise and air pollution, enhance community spirit, and relieve some of the burden on the greater Bellingham community from busy car traffic.

Part 2: Sehome Transportation Objectives

STO-1: Maintain Sehome's historic value and character.

Sehome is one of Bellingham's oldest residential neighborhoods. Maintaining its beautiful and historic character is important to residents, who wish to protect its historical buildings, narrow resident-friendly streets, old gardens and large trees, and overlook views of the City and Bellingham Bay. (Ref 1, VB 1, VB 3, VB 4, VB 5)

STO-2: Preserve livability of residents affected by the principal, secondary, and collector arterial streets.

We recognize the great importance of the through-traffic arterials that pass through our residential neighborhood connecting downtown, the University, the Lakeway and Samish Way corridors, Interstate 5, and outlying neighborhoods together. However, heavy traffic volume as well as possible future changes to flow may have a detrimental affect to the well-being and safety of residents living in proximity to these streets. It is the desire of the Neighborhood to preserve a sense of cohesive community, and to preserve all residents' safety and well-being. (Ref 3, VB16, VB 44)

STO-3: Increase alternate transportation routes to form a network across the Neighborhood connecting to other community routes.

With a high number of residents, traffic to and from the university, and the proximity to the Downtown Core, Sehome is a perfect neighborhood to encourage pedestrian, alternative, and bicycle routes. With through-traffic anticipated to dramatically increase over the next few years (Ref 2), the Sehome Neighborhood can play a key role in reducing traffic noise, pollution, and intrusion by providing cross-town pathways through the Neighborhood that connect to downtown, the Arboretum, and neighboring residential areas. By improving the usability and safety of current pedestrian and bike routes, we can establish:

- A. Cross-Neighborhood Pedestrian Paths (primarily for pedestrian use).
- B. Cross-Neighborhood Multi-Use Routes (all vehicles share the road in some areas; motor vehicles slow down for alternative transportation sharing the roadway).
- C. Striping in heavily used pedestrian crosswalks.
- D. Designated (striped) Bike Lanes.
- E. Designed Bike Routes (bikes and vehicles share the roadway in some areas; cars and busses slow down for slower traffic on the roadbed). (VB 1, VB 9, VB 15, VB 44, VB 45, VB 56, VB 60, TransA, TransB)

STO-4: Increase traffic-related safety.

Sehome is a very dense neighborhood with many students, commuters, and residents sharing the streets. When pedestrians, residents, and bicyclists meet with the high volume of through car-traffic, safety becomes a big concern for every citizen, not just those living in the Sehome Neighborhood. With the understanding that state regulations and requirements for each classification of street (such as principal arterial, secondary arterial, collector, and residential street), the Neighborhood desires to use any effective and appropriate method to ensure that traffic speeds are maintained at safe levels and to connect drivers with the Neighborhood. On arterial

streets, these may include, but are not limited to, special slow zones near schools and curved or limited-view ramps or entryways, trees and planted medians and street edges, signage, bicycle lanes, pedestrian crosswalks, pedestrian bump-outs, and street lighting. On residential streets, in addition to the above strategies, physical traffic calming measures such as speed bumps, rumble strips, or traffic islands may be installed if they meet the criteria stated in Bellingham's Neighborhood Traffic Safety Program (NTSP). (Ref 5, Ref 6, VB 15, TransC, TransD, TransE, TransF)

STO-5: Establish and maintain creative parking solutions.

Parking is a multi-faceted and complex set of issues in Sehome. Most of the housing was built before the 1960s when fewer families had multiple cars, and even the multi-housing units could not envision the future number of students and single residents owning cars requiring parking spots. Adding to the residential number of cars per housing unit are the Victorian mansions converted to multi-unit student housing, requiring former yard space and alley borders to be converted to parking. In addition to the family and student residential (and visitor) parking requirements, the University draws a large number of employees and students to campus daily, requiring some overflow parking on the residential streets. (Western Washington University is the largest employer in Bellingham, with 2,235 employees [see Bellingham Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Chapter, Pg T-26c].) Adding to the pressure for parking spots are the Downtown Core and the businesses along the downtown border, with needed on-street parking during business hours. Additional infilling of residents and businesses in the Downtown Core and the Waterfront District development will no doubt increase pressures for daytime and nighttime parking spots in these border streets. The Sehome Residential Parking Zone [RPZ] Program has ensured that registered residents within these zones have access to on-street parking, and has been most effective on those streets adjacent to the University campus.

Any future goals and implementations must evaluate the different needs on each street and must consider all the many different parking users (daytime, University commuters, downtown commuters, weekend church, family residential, student residential, visitor, and nighttime users). At this time, the Sehome Neighborhood wishes to include this Objective, but without specific implementations, deciding that much further study is needed before a cohesive plan can be developed. (VB 56, VB 9)

STO-6: Improve vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian use and safety along North Samish Way, in accordance with the proposed Samish Urban Village development.

The old Hwy. 99/Samish Way corridor poses many issues to the community. Specific plans for redevelopment must address and include traffic issues in accordance with the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan, redevelopment to Urban Village standards, and the City's arterial network master planning, traffic access from I-5 to the Downtown Core, any increase in traffic flow on adjacent arterials, and the addition of traffic directed to the Samish corridor by the new San Juan Boulevard. Because there is much work still to be done towards evolving a master Samish Urban Village Redevelopment Plan, our objective here is to emphasize the

immediate need for addressing pedestrian and bicycle access and safety issues. We believe that improving pedestrian crossings and bicycle use across the neighborhood and with connections to other neighborhood routes will increase use, and support well, any future plans. (Ref 1, Ref 5, VB 15, VB 16, VB 17, VB 45, TransA, TransB, TransC, TransD, TransE, TransF)

STO-7: Preserve green buffers along residential and arterial streets, and preserve site-views and greenway paths.

Not only do the old trees and gardens provide much enjoyment to the Neighborhood, they also establish a historical link to original settlers. Green pathways through the Neighborhood and to Sehome Arboretum, as well as Bay and territorial views, add great value to the larger Bellingham community. In addition, greenways, trees, street and median plantings, and views give through-traffic a sense of connection to the Neighborhood and may slow speeding (according to many traffic studies). (Ref 1, Ref 2, VB 1, VB 3, VB 4, VB 15, VB 60, TransD)

Part 3: Prioritized Implementation Strategy

Sehome Traffic Implementations

STI-1: Garden Street, between Holly and Oak

Garden is a secondary arterial connecting commuters to the University, and is a primary residential route to and from Sehome and South Hill neighborhoods, with an estimated volume of about 7, 470 vehicles per day (Nov. 14, 2007 traffic counts, Ref 7). Because Garden connects easily with other main routes to downtown and adjacent neighborhoods, there is also a high volume of pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Garden has been widened but remains a fairly narrow profile, still accommodating WTA bus traffic and parallel parking on both sides of the street. The mix of various modes of transportation sharing the roadbed is a tremendous asset to the city, and encourages a sense of community. However, much of the vehicle traffic travels through at speeds over the posted 25 mph limit, causing safety concerns to pedestrians, bicycles, and other vehicles. Of particular concern are the cars traveling from Holly to the Oak ramp (and beyond to the on-campus parking), as neighborhood residents report that they often increase speed on this straight-away.

Objectives: To discourage speeding and improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

The following implementations are recommendations intended to support these objectives:

- A. Improve pedestrian safety and visibility at strategic commonly used crossings that connect to the University and downtown routes, such as the south corner of Laurel at the Crooked Path/Laurel Pedestrian Route, and the Maple Multi-Use Route (see STI-4 and -6).
- B. Continue diligent police enforcement of 25mph speed zone and issuance of speeding tickets.

- C. Collaborate with Western Washington University and the Campus Community Coalition in finding ways to physically improve shared pedestrian crossings, and raise awareness of speeding hazards to the general and campus community in students and commuters.

STI-2: Forest and Chestnut Intersection

This intersection is busy and has limited visibility due to multiple lanes of one-way traffic turning into another one-way route. Neighborhood residents have observed that impatient drivers turning right from Forest onto Chestnut often encroach into the far right parking lane to turn right at the red light, without clear visibility in which to gauge fast-traveling cars. Neighborhood residents feel that this is a dangerous crossing for pedestrians, even when crossing with the light. (Ref 6)

Objectives: to improve safety for residents and pedestrians crossing, and to increase safety for turning traffic with limited visibility.

Due to the many State and local regulations required for major arterials and truck routes, the Neighborhood does not make any implementation recommendations. However, we do request further study for improvements to pedestrian safety at this intersection.

STI-3: Forest Street

Forest is scheduled for resurfacing and re-striping in 2009. Currently, one lane of traffic northbound from Fairhaven along Boulevard curves up the Ivy connector ramp to connect with Forest, picking up a second lane of traffic at North State, and widens into three traffic lanes past Berry. Because the ramp has a moderately steep grade up and around a shaded curve, ice can be a problem in the winter. The bicycle lane disappears at the Wharf/Boulevard/Ivy intersection and bicycles wishing to continue north must merge into car traffic along the concrete retaining wall, or cross both the north- and south-bound lanes of traffic along Boulevard to the interurban trail at Wharf. Pedestrians and runners can cross at Rose or Laurel marked crosswalks, however neighborhood residents feel that the safest crossing for slow walkers is the stop light at Chestnut (see STI-2). (Residents observe that many of the elderly Lutheran Church participants, who park in the church lot on the east side of Forest at Laurel, struggle to cross the street in time between the gaps in traffic flow on Sunday mornings. The reduction of traffic lanes to two will decrease this distance and hopefully improve the time it takes to cross.)

Objectives: to improve bicycle use and safety by adding a designated bike lane; to improve traffic safety as it travels up the curved ramp; to improve pedestrian use by buffering car traffic along the sidewalks and increasing crossing safety; to slow speeding traffic by creating an appealing route.

The following implementations are recommendations intended to support these objectives:

- D. Participate with Public Works in the actual design of the Forest Street improvements.

- E. Add a bicycle lane that will safely conduct bicycles from the Boulevard bicycle lane along Forest and down to Ellis, with connections to the Interurban trail at Wharf, and the bicycle lane at Magnolia.
- F. Improve traffic and bicycle safety along the curved Ivy connector ramp, which may include a reduction of traffic speed.
- G. Add greenbelts in strategic areas to buffer pedestrians and residents from trucks and the high volume of traffic, which could be an integration of trees and bio-filter boxes, planted bumpers, swales, or other planting that could filter street runoff before reaching the stormwater system.
- H. In anticipation of more pedestrian and non-motorized transportation traffic from downtown and the Depot Market across the neighborhood, improve crossing safety at Laurel along the Laurel Pedestrian Path, and at Maple along the proposed Maple Multi-Use Route (see STI-4 and -6).
- I. Enhance the bus stop at Maple and Forest in front of the YWCA (which may be a collaborative effort between the City and WTA), perhaps by creating a patterned concrete apron from the street corner to beyond the bus shelter, adding a park bench, trash cans, and installing some public art and a City Center sign/poster board. This is the neighborhood entry to the Public Market and Waterfront District development. (Ref 9).

STI-4: Laurel Pedestrian Path, from State to Abbott

Create a community-enhancing designated pedestrian path that takes advantage of the Gateway to the Waterfront District and proximity to the Downtown Core, and creates a connection to Crooked Path, territorial and Bay views, Sehome Historical District, access to the Sehome Arboretum, and the Samish Way corridor.

Objectives: to encourage pedestrian use and safety through the Neighborhood and to the Downtown Core; to create a pathway that enhances the Neighborhood and builds community identity.

The following implementations are recommendations intended to support these objectives:

- A. Improve pedestrian crossing safety at Forest (see Implementation STI-3F) and at the Crooked Path walkway at Garden (see Implementation STI-1A).
- B. Improve safety signage where appropriate, notifying car traffic of pedestrians.
- C. Add signage at Jersey informing pedestrians of Arboretum trailheads at top of street.
- D. Add sidewalk or a walking path at Laurel Park, between grass and parked cars, so that pedestrians can travel this block in front of the gravel parking strip between High and Indian.
- E. Improve street lighting along the heavily treed path between Indian and Jersey for safety and visibility at night (which may be a collaborative effort between various City departments).

F. Work with Parks Department to improve plantings at the pocket park along the pathway at the west entrance in the alley between Indian and Jersey, and at the Crooked Path approach between Forest and Garden.

G. Study the possibility of improving stormwater runoff between Liberty and Otis, which may include, but is not limited to, altering street edges to create narrow and possibly uneven or curving edges; adding low-impact bio-retention, bio-filter, natural drainage projects, such as swales, rain gardens, or SEA Streets (Ref 10); providing attractive pocket-sized greenspaces; and adding other natural systems of filtering to street runoff before entering the stormwater drainage system. Specific design of plantings and drainage will depend upon how existing street infrastructure can be retained, current street stormwater runoff and improvements needed, and existing site specifics, and should be a collaboration between the Sehome Neighborhood and City Planning, Public Works and Parks Department. Depending upon the final designs for the Samish Urban Village development, this could become the pedestrian “gateway” from Samish Way to the Neighborhood. (Note: At the corner of Mason and Laurel Streets, the residents attempted to plant cattails in the drainage ditch to reduce runoff, with an agreement from the City no to cut their foliage, but pruning crews did so nevertheless. Residents eventually gave up on the endeavor, losing an attractive wetland garden.)

STI-5. Indian Street Bicycle Route

Create a Bicycle Route along Indian, which will connect current designated bicycle lanes with shared-use streets to enhance the main bicycle route to the University, thus encouraging use and connections to the city-wide network of bicycle routes. Due to narrow street width, parking on both sides of the street in some sections, and wide buses along this route, it is not practical to expand the street or add a designated bike lane in all areas. Rather, in some sections bicycles must share the road with vehicles—in particular, the two blocks between Magnolia and Chestnut. The sections between the designated bicycle lanes are not marked and not obvious to riders not familiar with the area, and can be very intimidating to ride on.

Objectives: to increase the visibility and use of this bicycle route from the Downtown Core and York Neighborhood to the University; to improve safety for bicyclists as well as car traffic; to increase awareness and safety in those areas where mixed-use is currently happening but not marked.

The following implementations are recommendations intended to support these objectives:

- A. Designate Indian between the two blocks from the Magnolia bicycle lane to Chestnut as a Bicycle Route for bicycle traffic in both directions (this is already listed on the bicycle map), and where appropriate, add safety signage to alert drivers to bicycles using the roadway.
- B. If street width allows, add a designated bicycle lane on east side of Indian between Chestnut and Myrtle, to include parked cars.

- C. Designate Indian as it narrows between Myrtle and Oak as a Bicycle Route, adding any appropriate safety signage to alert drivers to bicycles and pedestrians using the roadway.
- D. Add appropriate safety signs for bicycles, pedestrians, and drivers at the intersection of High and Indian where visibility of merging bike and car traffic is poor.

STI-6: Maple Street Multi-Use Route

Create an east-west route that will easily accommodate alternative modes of transportation such as bicycles, Segways, skateboards, pedestrians with disabilities, or strollers. Maple Street will retain its original narrow profile. Although steep, it is already very pedestrian-friendly, reaching both the east and the west neighborhood borders and offering a “gateway” to downtown. By creating a multi-use route, all forms of transportation will share the roadway on the flat section, with faster traffic accommodating and slowing down for slower traffic sharing the roadway. Due to the steep grade up the hill from State to High, slower non-motorized transportation should be separated from cars by widening the street to allow for a separate lane on the roadbed or by establishing a Shared-Use path along the south side of the street. (Ref 8) Cars speeding along Garden to Ellis, and bicycles, skateboards, or sleds speeding on the down-grade from High to State are currently a great concern, so all modes of transportation must comply with speed limits.

Objectives: to encourage alternative transportation use through the neighborhood and to the Depot Market and Downtown Core by creating an east-west route; to improve safety for pedestrians and alternative transportation modes; to increase car-driver awareness of mixed use on roadbed; to reduce the pressure on existing arterials and reduce the environmental impacts of cars by providing safe alternative transportation routes.

The following implementations are recommendations intended to support these objectives:

- A. Improve pedestrian safety at crossings at Garden to connect pedestrians safely to downtown and Depot Market. (See STI-3F.)
- B. Work with City Engineers to design a route that will separate non-motorized traffic from car traffic, which may include, but is not limited to, widening the roadbed to allow for a separated lane, or expanding the south sidewalk between Forest and High to 10 to 12 feet wide to establish a Shared-Use Path. (Ref 8) (We strongly suggest from State to Forest also, even though this is in the Downtown Core District.)
- C. Post signage or paint symbols on the sidewalk to indicate appropriate use of the shared-use route.
- D. Post Warning/Steep Downgrade along north side of street between High and State.

- E. Create a Multi-Use Route between High and Samish Way, indicating that roadway includes alternative traffic, adding appropriate safety signage which may include striping or symbols painted on roadbed or posted signage.
- F. If appropriate, at approaches to intersections close to Samish Way (such as Jersey, Key, and Liberty) post safety signage such as Warning/Bikes on Road or Bike/Speed Zone signs.
- G. Add raised striping, or other appropriate methods to slow car traffic (without disturbing multi-mode vehicles) near High and Jersey intersections.
- H. Improve merging access onto Samish Way from the Maple route at the concrete barrier which prevents car traffic entering Maple from Samish, including posting signage warning that path ends at intersection.

STI-7: Otis and 34th Streets Multi-Use Route

Create a multi-use Route by connecting the Bill McDonald/Byron pedestrian access/easement path at the southeast corner of Sehome along 34th to the east end of the Laurel Pedestrian Path (and from there down to the Laurel Gateway to downtown). Currently, 34th has a rural route profile with occasional side ditches, no designated traffic lanes, no sidewalks or shoulders, and no designated bicycle lanes. Residents wish to keep the feel of this street rural and allow bicycles, pedestrians, and cars to share the roadbed. Eventually, this may change due to future building developments. In fact, future development may dictate improvements to the street, such as adding sidewalks, parking, and bicycle lanes, which must maintain a consistency of safety for cars, pedestrians, and bicycles alike. Any future changes that will affect car, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic should be a collaborative effort with all participants. The evolving nature of this street and route limits our specific recommendations to only our immediate concern for safety with current neighborhood use. Objectives: to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety along the route; to improve safety for pedestrians and bicycles connecting to Sehome Village, Sehome High School, or to other neighborhoods; to participate in future changes, improvements, and developments along the route.

The following implementations are recommendations intended to support these objectives:

- A. Combine efforts with Happy Valley Neighborhood Association and Public Works to add a safe pedestrian crossing where most appropriate at Bill McDonald Parkway, near the Byron pedestrian access/easement path.
- B. Add a bicycle ramp or access at the Byron pedestrian access/easement so bicycles crossing Bill MacDonald Parkway may enter to use the 34th Street multi-use route.

STI-8: Myrtle Pedestrian Route

Designate Myrtle from High to Newell as a Pedestrian Route. This is one of the most beautiful walks through the Neighborhood and already a popular pedestrian route and connector to the Arboretum paths. Preserving the lane as is and ensuring that car traffic and pedestrian traffic can equally share the roadway will strengthen the

community's enjoyment. Currently, a dirt footpath connects Myrtle Street to Otis, and is used by residents of Area 11 to access 34th Street and Samish Way.

Objectives: to preserve the greenbelts and narrow roadway; to encourage pedestrian use and safety; to increase car-driver awareness of mixed use on roadbed; to create a pathway that enhances the neighborhood and builds community identity

The following implementations are recommendations intended to support these objectives:

- A. Add the Myrtle Pedestrian Route to the City inventory of pathways and pedestrian routes, which may include listing it on the community trails maps. We understand from the City Planners that signage is not necessary; however, the Neighborhood may wish to independently undertake marking this path in some way that will comply with city-wide regulations.
- B. Investigate public right-of-way on the footpath between Myrtle Street and Otis Street. If this is public right-of-way, ensure that it remains open for foot traffic.

STI-9: Pine Pedestrian/Interurban Trail

Improve pedestrian safety along the Pine Interurban trail which connects Garden to Boulevard Park. This is a popular path for Western Washington University students and residents to access the interurban trail along Boulevard. The path can be quite difficult to follow unless pedestrians are already quite familiar with the routes and stairways, especially in the winter or at night. In places the path is dark and the foliage is dense, providing good hiding places for questionable activities.

Objectives: to improve pedestrian safety by illuminating pathway and improving crosswalks; to improve pedestrian use by marking route.

The following implementations are recommendations intended to support these objectives:

- A. Add street lights along wooded path from Garden to Cedar Park to improve safety and visibility at night. The trail is heavily wooded with switchbacks which creates dark screened areas where it is easy to hide, especially at night. This may be a collaborative effort between various City departments.
- B. Add a pedestrian crossing at Pine and North State, north corner, using whatever means street and traffic regulations allow.
- C. Add trail marker post or sign at Pine and North State, as there is no indication that this is a public pathway between the posts at the far (east) side of park and the stairs at the alley behind the Armory.

STI-10: North Samish Way (old Hwy 99)

Improve safety and alternative transportation usability of North Samish Way by adding bike lanes if the right-of-way allows, protected pedestrian walkways, pedestrian crossing improvements, and traffic turn lane. Any improvements and changes must be in accordance with future plans regarding the Samish Urban Village

development, and the scheduled San Juan Boulevard improvements and connections to the Interstate 5 overpass. These changes will greatly increase traffic volume along North Samish Way, and specifics will need to be coordinated and approved as part of the larger development plans. The evolving nature of this street limits our specific recommendations to only our immediate concern for safety with current neighborhood use. **Objectives: to increase pedestrian use and safety by providing safe crosswalks across North Samish Way; to link pedestrian routes with other neighborhoods and east-west routes.**

The following implementations are recommendations intended to support these objectives:

- A. Add an enhanced pedestrian crossing, which may include a small pedestrian bump-out on the west side (or any other type of protected area where pedestrians can stand and wait) in the vicinity of Ellis and Mason where visibility best allows vehicles to clearly see pedestrians at the crossings. (Two different street plating grids meet at oblique angles at this intersection.)
- B. Work with City Engineers to pinpoint the best location between Bill MacDonald Parkway and the Ellis/Mason pedestrian crossing to add a second enhanced pedestrian crossing approximately mid-point along this long, straight stretch.

Part 4: Circulation Plan References

Ref 1

In the Sehome Neighborhood Survey 2005:

A. The top four reasons residents chose Sehome Neighborhood to live in are:

1. Close to downtown
2. Scenic views
3. Close to WWU
4. Close to walking trails

B. 60% of respondents state that rules should be upheld to maintain the “look” of Sehome.

C. Over 70% of respondents state that size of construction should be restricted to conform to existing building size and to protect views.

Ref 2

“City of Bellingham Neighborhoods, Urban Centers & UGA Planning Areas – Residential Land Supply S” (page 7 and 8) graph of neighborhood infill numbers, referenced from the “Summary of Table LU-16c of Bellingham Comprehensive Plan dated 4/25/06”, estimating the distribution by neighborhood of the anticipated growth adopted by Whatcom County from the 2004 Washington State Growth Management Act.

Ref 3

See City of Bellingham Maps of Arterial Routes, Truck Routes, and Neighborhood Association borders, posted on the City of Bellingham website at <http://www.cob.org/services/maps/maps/index.aspx>.

Note: BMC 13.04.030 Primary Arterials

A. Function. To expedite movement of traffic between major generators such as the central business district, outlying commercial areas or other cities, the college, and industrial areas; to collect and distribute traffic from freeways to less important streets or directly to traffic destinations; the predominant traffic will be through trips with minimum direct service to abutting land uses.

H. Planning Features. Desirable to bypass major shopping areas, parks, and residential developments; should never be adjacent to elementary schools or areas of high pedestrian traffic; will seldom be closer than one mile apart

Note: BMC 13.04.040 Secondary Arterials

A. Function. To collect and distribute traffic from primary arterials to less important streets or directly to secondary traffic generators such as high schools, major parks, multiple residence areas, hospitals, major recreation areas, the civic field and similar uses;

I. Planning Features. Secondary arterials will seldom be located closer than ½ mile from a primary or other secondary arterials. It is desirable to bypass major shopping areas and parks; secondary arterials should never be adjacent to elementary schools or areas of high pedestrian traffic.

Note: BMC 13.04.050 Collector Arterials

A. Function. To provide traffic movement within smaller areas or neighborhoods by collecting and distributing traffic from primary and secondary arterials to access or residential streets; these streets are located where the traffic volume is increased by the needs of nonresidential land uses or areas of high population densities where primary and secondary arterial service is unavailable;

I. Planning Features. Should be located only where a minimum of disruption to the residential uses will occur, if possible; collectors are located no closer than a quarter of a mile from all other arterials.

Ref 4

City of Bellingham, Police Department, Sehome Neighborhood Calls 2007

Reported Incidents	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alcohol Offenses	4	9	21	13	22	7	10	0	0	0	0	0
Assault (Felony)	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Assault (Misdemeanor)	1	1	1	5	6	6	4	0	0	0	0	0
Auto Theft	2	0	3	2	5	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
Burglary (Residential)	4	1	8	6	7	6	5	0	0	0	0	0
Crimes Against Person	3	1	0	2	3	5	1	0	0	0	0	0

Crimes Against Property	10	5	2	7	9	5	8	0	0	0	0	0
Domestic Violence	6	4	5	3	9	6	3	0	0	0	0	0
Drug Offenses	1	1	3	4	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
DUI	2	0	0	4	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Malicious Mischief	6	7	20	8	10	11	21	0	0	0	0	0
Public Order Maintenance	24	27	36	31	37	35	25	0	0	0	0	0
Robbery	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Service Calls	36	33	48	43	45	45	25	0	0	0	0	0
Sex Crime Reports	2	3	1	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Theft	11	8	12	14	15	8	6	0	0	0	0	0
Traffic Accidents	4	4	2	5	6	2	3	0	0	0	0	0
Traffic Offenses/Complain	21	24	19	16	18	17	14	0	0	0	0	0
Vehicle Prowls	16	5	6	15	7	6	9	0	0	0	0	0
All Others	6	3	4	4	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	159	136	195	186	207	167	141	0	0	0	0	0

Ref 5

“The Great Neighborhood Book” (published by Project for Public Spaces, pages 56 and 57) says this about traffic control:

.....Speeding traffic is probably the single biggest problem that besets North American neighborhoods. Busy streets with rushing vehicles spark a vicious cycle in which people who might prefer to walk or bike end up driving because they fear for their safety. Numerous studies have shown that the speed of traffic, much more than the volume, is what poses a threat to pedestrians. One study conducted by the British government found that 85 percent of pedestrians hit by cars traveling 40 miles an hour (not an uncommon speed on streets in many American communities) were killed. In comparison, only 5 percent of pedestrians hit by vehicles traveling 20 miles an hour were killed. (Citing this same study, “Streets for People, Traffic Calming” by New York City’s Advocates for Walking, states “45% of people die when struck by motorists going 30 mph.”)

.....Lowering speed limits is one logical response to this problem. But many people herald traffic calming as a more effective way of keeping drivers from roaring down their streets because it’s enforced 24 hours a day, not just when a police car is on the scene.

.....Another complaint is that narrower streets, frequently a traffic-calming goal, are more dangerous for motorists. But when the city of Longmont, Colorado – a booming Denver suburb – examined the 20,000 accidents on local streets over an eight-year period, it found that “as street width widens, accidents per mile per year increase exponentially.”

Ref 6

The intersection of Chestnut and Forest streets was reported in the Bellingham Herald, in Aug. 2006, as the City's most dangerous to pedestrians and cyclists, at 7 hits between Jan. 2003, and Aug 2006

Ref 7

Data supplied by Bellingham Public Works Department, ~~September~~-November 2007.

Ref 8

WSDOT, Design Manual M 22-01, November 2006, page 1020-3

1020.06 Shared-Use Path Design

“.....The desirable width of a shared-use path is 12 feet. The minimum width is 10 feet....Use of 12- to 14- foot paths is recommended when there will be substantial use by bicyclists, or joggers, skaters, and pedestrians.“

WSDOT, Design Manual M 22-01, November 2006, page 1020-8

(12) Grades

....”When using a steeper grade, add an additional 4 to 6 feet of width to permit slower-speed maneuverability and to provide a place where bicyclists can dismount and walk.....”

Ref 9

Bellingham City Center Master Plan, 5. Automobile Circulation, Wayfinding and Signage (page 5-4)

http://www.cob.org/documents/planning/publications/ccmp/city_center_master_plan_chap_05_a_uto_circ_wayfinding_signage.pdf

Ref 10

“Natural Approaches to Stormwater Management, Low Impact Development in Puget Sound”, published by Puget Sound Action Team, Office of the Governor 2003

http://www.psat.wa.gov/Publications/LID_studies/LID_approaches.htm

“Low Impact Development, Technical Guide Manual for Puget Sound”, published by Puget Sound Action Team, Office of the Governor 2005

http://www.psat.wa.gov/Publications/LID_tech_manual05/lid_index.htm

“Drainage & Sewer System, Natural Drainage Systems, Street Edge Alternatives (SEA Streets) Project”, posted on Seattle City website by Seattle Public Utilities

http://www.seattle.gov/util/About_SPU/Drainage_&_Sewer_System/Natural_Drainage_Systems/Natural_Drainage_Overview/index.asp

Bellingham Comprehensive Plan

Visions for Bellingham Goal Statements, Framework Goals and Policies Chapter

VB 1 – Bellingham relies on distinctive neighborhoods, a vital downtown area and the community's respect for its natural setting to retain its unique identity in the 21st century. Pg F-2

VB 3 – Bellingham continues to retain its natural, green setting by protecting unique natural features and public open spaces, creating greenbelts and preserving wooded hillsides in and around the City. New development is encouraged to incorporate existing mature vegetation and additional trees and native vegetation. Open space corridors along creeks include connections from the Bay to Whatcom and Padden lakes as well as along the Squalicum and Chuckanut Creek corridors heading to the mountains. In order to preserve or create these green corridors and open spaces, the community employs a variety of techniques, including incentives and regulations for the design and siting of new development, as well as public acquisition. Pg F-2

VB 4 – Because infill is a major growth strategy, Bellingham devotes considerable energy to determining how to accommodate growth in existing neighborhoods in a manner that complements neighborhood character and builds on the pattern of planned park and open space systems. Pg F-2

VB 5 – A large number of historic structures remain, providing a sense of place and history for existing and future citizens. Incentives assist in retaining and restoring historic structures and encouraging new development, which is complementary in terms of architectural style and scale. These incentives may include property tax breaks, zoning and building code flexibility for adaptive uses, and density or other bonuses that encourage good design. Pg F-2

VB 9 – Downtown Bellingham retains its role as the community's center through preservation and increased use of its fine historic buildings. Professional offices; government services; cultural, art and entertainment facilities; support services; retail uses; and higher density housing combine to create the complex mix that is downtown. Access to these features is supported by an integrated parking and alternative transportation system that is responsive to its users. New development adds to the existing building stock, complementing it in scale and quality. Public buildings set a standard of design quality that positively contributes to the community. Pg F-3

VB 15 – Both pedestrian and bicycle facilities connect living, working and recreational areas throughout the town. New development is designed to be pedestrian friendly. Walking is made easier by requirements for street trees and separated sidewalks on all new or reconstructed arterials except where existing mature vegetation or terrain suggest otherwise. Bicycling as a form of recreation and bicycling as a form of transportation flourishes, using facilities that are well lit and are built and maintained to allow year-round, all-weather use, and allow safe on and off-street travel. Pg F-4

VB 16 – Bellingham continues to recognize the need for an efficient arterial system, which minimizes through traffic on local residential streets. Transportation grant applications and local transportation funding priorities address capacities on arterials, the I-5 overpasses, and the Interstate between Bill McDonald Parkway and West Bakerview. Pg F-4

VB 17 – Development patterns that encourage walking, biking and transit use are fostered through incentives and zoning regulations, including provisions for developments that allow people to live within walking distance of shopping and employment. These provisions may

encourage small scale neighborhood centers as well as cottage industry or home occupations. Pg F-4

VB 44 – Bellingham is characterized by clean air and water and low levels of noise pollution. Particular attention is paid to noise pollution from the I-5 corridor, the airport noise impact area, and the waterfront industrial area. Pg. F-7

VB 45 – Bellingham reduces noise pollution and increases air quality by reducing its reliance on the automobile and promoting walking, bicycling and other modes of transportation. Pg F-7

VB 56 – A significant increase in the number of bicycle commutes into the central downtown area reduces the need for new parking spaces while decreasing the congestion, noise and pollution caused by motorized traffic. Lower levels of motor-driven traffic (and a lessened need for parking) frees up street areas for open green spaces, creative commercial activities and cultural events that are increasingly attracting people to the downtown and waterfront area. Pg F-9

VB 60 – Developed parks and trails are integrated into the City's open space system. Acquisition and development of park sites that adequately serve both existing and newly developing neighborhoods are accomplished in part through developer contributions. Pg F-9

Chapter 3 – Transportation

TransA “Transportation planning is intricately tied to land use and the pattern of development that evolves as an urban area grows. A transportation system includes various travel modes, such as pedestrian, bicycle, bus, automobile, freight truck, marine ferry, railroad, and airplanes. A multi-modal transportation network includes and connects all of these different travel modes in an effective and efficient manner, including connections within and between modes.” Pg T-1

TransB “Bellingham's status as the largest urban population center also means that it has the highest concentrations of residential density. Well-connected pedestrian and bicycle networks, as well as convenient high-frequency transit service, often become more cost-effective and efficient as residential density increases in an urban area.” Pg T-1

TransC “Bellingham's aim is not to eliminate private automobiles, but to encourage the use of other transportation modes, wherever and whenever possible, while reducing the costly transportation capacity demand made by automobiles, and especially single-occupant vehicles (SOV), on City arterial streets. If the target goals are achieved over the next 20 years, then 75% of the total trips made in the City are still anticipated to be made by automobile. Clearly, this requires Bellingham to continue to provide a safe and efficient transportation network for automobiles as well.” Pg T-2

TransD “Given Bellingham's circumstances as the major population, employment, shopping, and entertainment center in Whatcom County, the City officials have recognized that the City cannot build its way out of traffic congestion by continually widening arterials to add capacity for automobiles. Instead, the City is attempting to focus transportation funding on infrastructure improvements that will make walking, bicycling, and transit more viable, convenient, and safe.” Pg T-2

TransE “One of the City’s primary goals is to enhance the public environment at the street level, which is everyone’s community space, and design the urban streetscape primarily for people rather than strictly for automobiles.” Pg T-2

TransF “While adding capacity to an arterial street may be necessary in some circumstances, continual road widening is not a long-term solution to rush-hour traffic congestion. The City’s transportation policies are focused on managing the transportation network safely and efficiently for all modes without unnecessarily widening arterial streets to add capacity for automobiles.” Pg T-4

Maps

See the Circulation Routes map (overlayed on a Land Use Map) at the end of the Plan.

Chapter 4: Housing

This chapter deals with the numbers and types of housing in the Sehome Neighborhood. For information on location and character of housing stock, see Neighborhood Design.

Part 1: Existing Stock

The city has stated in its 2006 Comprehensive Plan that the Neighborhood should have an additional 52 housing units and 84 new residents to meet its share of city infill requirements to meet the state Growth Management Act targets. The 17 net new units of the High & Laurel street condominium project brings that number to 35.

The average sale price of a single family home in the Bellingham area since 2003 has increased 60%. (Whatcom County Real Estate Research Reports, 2004-2006.) It is likely that the home values in Sehome have experienced a similar increase. The styles of homes are primarily either historic homes built between 1890 and 1930, or post-historic homes in area 14.

Part 2: Analysis and Objectives for housing

Analysis

With a housing density of 12.5 units per acre, Sehome is one of the most intensely developed neighborhoods in the city. The two largest areas that remain candidates for further infill are the St. Joseph's Hospital parking area north of Maple Street, zoned multi-unit high-density, and the Samish Way area, currently zoned Auto Commercial but the subject of a proposed rezone discussed elsewhere in this plan, that would add multi-unit residential in a mixed-use Urban Center.

If these two areas were developed to the limit of their potential (assuming rezoning of Samish Way), Sehome would accommodate a significant number of additional housing units, potentially many times the number currently called for under the city's GMA plan.

Because of the high level of current density and the extraordinary level of potential density, if commercial zoning on Samish Way is changed to mixed use, the Neighborhood feels strongly that current single-family historic housing stock should be protected. The Neighborhood would like recognition of Sehome's proactive approach to accepting infill requirements in excess of the GMA plan, in the form of latitude to consider extraordinary measures to protect some of the original residential areas of the Neighborhood from further conversion to multi-family from historic single-family.

Housing costs in Sehome have risen substantially in recent years, making home ownership and family housing a challenge for working families and individuals that are a critical component of the Sehome community. As these populations, including Western Washington University faculty and support staff, migrate to less expensive housing outside the Neighborhood, two significant impacts occur:

- Traffic and parking requirements for those working in and around Sehome are intensified.

- The demographic of the neighborhood shifts, and existing communities are disrupted.

The historic nature of much of the single-family housing in Sehome demands special consideration. Please refer to Chapter 7, Neighborhood Character for specific proposals to preserve historic housing stock.

Housing Objectives (HOs)

- HO-1: New housing in the Sehome Neighborhood in excess of the GMA target numbers should be focused in the Samish Way Urban Center or St. Joseph's parking lot redevelopment areas and away from areas containing historic housing stock.
- HO-2: Historic housing stock should be preserved or restored whenever possible.
- HO-3: Affordable housing options for working families and individuals should remain available in Sehome.
- HO-4: New and remodel housing construction in Sehome should have minimal environmental impact.
- HO-5: New housing should be compatible in terms of scale and character.

Part 3: Prioritized Housing implementation strategy

Housing Actions (HAs)

- HA-1: High-density single-family housing should be considered as an alternative to high-density multi-family in the areas currently occupied by St. Joseph's parking lots.
- HA-2: The city should work with the Neighborhood to explore ways in which sustainable building practices such as those required for LEED certification should be encouraged through the use of incentives and, where possible, regulation.
- HA-3: Prior to the paving of St. Joseph's parking lots, that area was filled with historic single-family homes that were a significant part of the historic character of the neighborhood. Consistent with LUZA-5, Chapter 2, Land Use, Part 4, Prioritized implementation strategy, the city should support the neighborhood in exploring options for a special relocation zone for historic homes in this area as a partial restoration of that characteristic housing type in Sehome.
- HA-4: Mixed-income residential development should be encouraged through the use of incentives, and where possible, regulation.
- HA-5: The Neighborhood and the City should work to create a survey of historic properties outside of the already recognized Sehome Hill Historic District, to identify and document additional areas of the Sehome Neighborhood or individual structures within Sehome Neighborhood that would qualify for recognition at the local, state or national level.

Chapter 5: Capital Facilities

Neighborhood understanding of changes to existing facilities since the 1980 Neighborhood Plan are limited, and further research is required to fully update this section. More complete analysis, objectives, and implementation strategy will be proposed in future updates after such research is complete.

Part 1: Existing facilities

Maple Street Fire Station

The Bellingham Fire Department's Maple Street Station at the corner of Maple and Indian Streets continues to serve several areas of Bellingham, including Sehome.

Western Washington University

The 1980 Sehome Neighborhood Plan indicated that, though not a part of the Sehome Neighborhood, WWU parking lots contiguous with Sehome boundaries were not landscaped and should be so in order to provide a visual buffer to the adjacent residential areas. Authors of the 2007 plan have not determined whether or not this has been adequately addressed. This section will be further updated in a future amendment to the plan after sufficient input has been received from the neighborhood. The Sehome Neighborhood also hopes to work with Western Washington University as it continues to develop its master plan.

Part 2: Analysis and Objectives for public facilities

The Sehome Neighborhood lacks a public meeting place despite its substantial population. At one time, the Maple Street Fire Station was under consideration for decommissioning, and the neighborhood expressed an interest in use of this building as a community center at that time.

As noted above, the Neighborhood does not have a sufficiently clear understanding of the current status of the items from the 1980 plan to provide reliable analysis. To the degree that those items are still issues, the previously recommended remedies remain policy of the neighborhood.

CFO-1: Sehome should gain a community center convenient to the entire neighborhood, to conduct neighborhood business and support community building activities within Sehome.

Part 3: Prioritized implementation strategy

As noted above, the Neighborhood does not have a sufficiently clear understanding of the current status of the items from the 1980 plan to provide reliable analysis. To the degree that those items are still issues, the previously recommended remedies remain policy of the neighborhood.

CFA-1: Consideration should be given to using the Maple Street Fire Station as a community center if and when the Fire Department moves its operations from the site.

CFA-2: To the degree that the issue has not been addressed since the 1980 Sehome Neighborhood Plan, it is recommended that the Western Washington University

Parking areas contiguous to the Sehome Neighborhood be landscaped to provide a visual buffer to adjacent residential areas.

- CFA-3 The Neighborhood and the City should investigate the possibility of building a community center with a green roof view platform on the north corner of Laurel Park to provide public meeting space and increase the usable park space.

Chapter 6: Utilities and Services

Neighborhood understanding of changes to existing utilities and services since the 1980 Neighborhood Plan are limited, and further research is required to fully update this section. More complete analysis, objectives, and implementation strategy will be proposed in future updates after such research is complete.

Part 1: Existing utilities and services

Drainage

The 1980 Sehome Neighborhood Plan indicated that most of the Neighborhood had adequate utilities, with a notable exception in the 34th Street area, which had no storm water system, and runoff from Sehome Hill exceeded capacity of the roadside ditches. Authors of the 2007 plan have not determined whether or not this has been adequately addressed.

It is the understanding of the authors that no storm water system serves the Samish Way area, though at date of writing, this has not been confirmed.

Water

The 1980 Sehome Neighborhood Plan indicated that a water transmission line was needed along Myrtle Street on the north side of Sehome Hill. Authors of the 2007 plan have not determined whether or not this has been adequately addressed.

Part 2: Analysis and Objectives for utilities and services

Analysis

As noted above, the Neighborhood does not have a sufficiently clear understanding of the current status of the items from the 1980 plan to provide reliable analysis. To the degree that those items are still issues, the previously recommended remedies remain policy of the Neighborhood.

The St. Joseph's parking lots north of Maple Street are currently free of overhead lines, with the exception of a single line running north to south through the middle of the property. This absence of overhead utilities is aesthetically advantageous, and affords movement into that area of relocated historic houses, in the eventuality that St. Joseph's sells the property and other conditions support such activity. The utility lines running along Maple Street adjacent to the St. Joseph's parking lot are aesthetically displeasing and interfere with ancient trees that border parts of the parking lots.

Objectives

- USO-1: Protect property and Bellingham Bay water quality by providing storm water utilities that meet or exceed the requirements for storm water handling in new developments or master planned areas in Bellingham.
- USO-2: Additional overhead utility lines beyond those in place today should be avoided, particularly in the St. Joseph's parking lot areas.

- USO-3: Any major street or alley improvements should include underground placement of utility lines.

Part 3: Prioritized implementation strategy

As noted above, the neighborhood does not have a sufficiently clear understanding of the current status of the items from the 1980 plan to provide reliable analysis. To the degree that those items are still issues, the previously recommended remedies remain policy of the neighborhood.

- USA-1: The Samish Way Urban Center master planning process should include a strategy to ensure that adequate storm water handling is provided while not unnecessarily inhibiting potential redevelopment of the area. See Chapter 8, Land Use, for more.
- USA-2: Where safely possible, utilities in any redevelopment of the St. Joseph's Hospital parking lot area should be placed underground to avoid additional overhead utility lines. Consideration should be given to burying the existing line in that area. Consideration should also be given to burying the lines that run along Maple Street.

Chapter 7: Neighborhood Design

Part 1: Neighborhood Character

The Sehome Neighborhood is best known for the well-built Scandinavian millworker homes constructed on the north slope of Sehome hill between 1890 and 1930, which comprised most of the original township of Sehome. This remains one of two large areas of owner-occupied single family housing in the Neighborhood and has defined the overall character of Sehome in the perceptions of many inside and outside the Neighborhood.

The boundaries of Sehome incorporate several distinct types of neighborhood character however, with approximately 48% of the developable area in the Neighborhood currently zoned for multi-family use, and approximately 19% of developable land zoned for commercial use.

Because much of the development in the Sehome Neighborhood predates current zoning, there are a number of non-conforming use structures throughout the Neighborhood, including multi-family residential buildings within single-family zones and commercial buildings within multi-family residential zones.

Single-family residential

Historic areas

The historic homes of Sehome, which are largely clustered in Area 11 but still exist in significant numbers in the multi-family-zoned areas of the Neighborhood, are characterized by many of the Craftsman, Cottage, Four Square and Fold Victorian home structural and decorative details common to the day. Being largely a blue-collar millworker neighborhood, a large proportion of the homes are relatively modest in size, often between 800-1500 square feet. Some larger homes, especially the Prairie Style Four Squares, were sited near the bottom of the hill, and in the best view locations along the west side of the historic area.

The historic areas typically include landscape strips (approximately 6 to 12 ft. wide) between the street and the sidewalk, with alleyway access to the back yards. Power and utility lines typically run through the alleyways. The landscape strips combined with the absence of utility lines in the streets provide a street experience that is notable in its pleasant historic feel, contributing to the popularity of the area and contributing to the property values in these parts of the Neighborhood.

Streets in the historic single-family residential areas are typically narrow, resulting in a single lane of traffic. Residents have consistently expressed satisfaction with this state, due to the visual impact of the roads through appropriate scale and landscape strips and the traffic calming effect it provides.

Other housing styles of lesser quality built during that period, such as cheap wood frame shanties, were eventually replaced with more substantial homes, mostly of the predominant types. Some very substantial brick apartment buildings were also built then. Areas 14 (East side of Sehome Hill, mostly more recent homes) and 16 (Samish Way commercial district) are exceptions to this history.

A few large trees remain in the Historic District, though many houses on the hillside retain significant views.

Post-historic areas

Between Samish Way to the east/northeast and the Western Washington University/Arboretum area to the southwest, is a large area of post-war single family homes, mostly on large treed lots, zoned as RS-10,000. Many of these homes enjoy relative privacy, which is prized by the residents. Access to the Area 14 portion of these homes is limited to Byron St. to the east and 34th St. to the north., with egress only to the north due to one-way access at Byron.

Some recent four bedroom duplexes at 34th Street and Abbott Street break the continuity of the area's character, due to minimal landscaping and multiple car parking parallel and directly adjacent to the road.

There is at least one historic home currently located in this area on 34th Street.

Above the Historic District on Liberty, Mason and Newell Streets is a small area of homes built mostly between the 1940's- 1970's, sharing the same lot size and much of the landscape character of the historic homes below them. These homes enjoy direct access to the Arboretum and some of the most dramatic views available in the Sehome Neighborhood.

On the northeast side of 34th St. is a mobile home park that provides 28 units of low-cost housing. Condition of these units ranges dramatically from excellent to very poor.

Multi-unit residential

The multi-unit residential areas on the west side of Sehome consist of a mix of apartments and condominiums of mid-to-late Twentieth Century architecture, with an apparently significant, but unknown portion of historic single-family homes that have been converted or are being used for multi-family use. A few historic multi-family buildings dot the area as well.

Thanks to the slope of the terrain in this area, many of these residences enjoy views over the south end of downtown and the bay, despite the heavily treed nature of much of the area.

Area 15 is largely fully developed multiunit residential.

There are a number of commercial buildings in Area 5 along Forest Street, where they are permitted within the multi-family high-density current zoning.

Commercial

Commercial portions of the Neighborhood, including Areas 3, 4, and 16, are largely developed along lines consistent with other commercial development in Bellingham. For more detail on the character of these areas, see the Sub-area Description section in Chapter 2.

Area 4 is regarded by the City as appropriate for treatment as an extension of the City Center Master Plan, and has recently received a beautification that incorporated many of the improvements required to be consistent with that plan.

Area 16 is generally regarded as one of the areas of Bellingham most in need of improvement, in the areas of public safety, beautification, and business density. See other sections regarding the Samish Way Urban Center.

Area 3 is a small area at the intersection of State and Ivy Streets that is similar to the adjacent areas of downtown in character, being lightly developed commercial space.

Special historic site: the Armory

The National Guard Armory, built in 1910, has heavy masonry walls, crenellated parapet, and rounded towers. Both the National Guard and the Army Reserve used the facility full-time until 1953, when reduced training schedules allowed the National Guard to convert the main floor into a public roller-skating rink. The rink remained a community mainstay for 36 years, until water damage forced its closure in 1989. Known then as Mead's Rolleradium, named after longtime managers Gladys and Ray Mead, many Bellingham residents continue to recall fond memories of evenings at the roller rink. In 1972, Western Washington University purchased the armory from the National Guard for \$1. In addition to allowing the rink to remain open, the University housed the Theater Department's prop and scene shops in the building. There is a one-story auxiliary building to the south of the main building of simple construction.

The Threat: In 2006, the Armory was placed on the Most Endangered Historic Properties List from the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation. Sustained water damage from years of maintenance neglect and inaction has made continued viable use of the building problematic for reasons of safety. Students from the WWU theater department staged a protest in 2007 regarding the unhealthy work environment within the Armory. Additionally, as the University plans to expand its facilities on other properties in Bellingham, the armory has become surplus. 2007 zoning for the parcel is high density multi-family, a category that would allow dozens of condominium units on the site if developed to its full capacity. The rehabilitation needs of the Armory, combined with local development pressures, raise the specter of demolition as developers may look to the highest and best economic use of the land.

Part 2: Neighborhood Design Goals

Many residents chose to live in Sehome because of the types of housing found there, and they would like the character of the Neighborhood preserved. As such, they consider the predominant types to be prototypes for the Neighborhood and would prefer that new construction, especially infill, remodels, and replacement of current housing, reflect the prototypes. The application of these prototypes, however, should always be within the context of the houses and other units within the visual area of the development. In other words, these prototypes do not necessarily direct development in commercial areas where there are no or few houses or in areas where the houses reflect different styles, as in Area 14. But the prototypes would be very useful in designing houses and multi-family units in areas such as the Historic District or along Garden Street, for instance.

The Sehome Neighborhood subscribes not only to the necessity of zoning, but also to its essence as a concept applicable to architectural design standards. A house that would be perfectly appropriate in another community might not fit in when all or most of the other houses on that block are of a different common style. Within the historic areas (both designated and not yet designated) in Sehome, most homes were built between 1880 and 1930. In some areas, such as Garden Street, the houses were of very large scale, while in others, such as the Historic District north of the Hill, the houses were of more modest proportions. The aesthetic of a community suffers when a development is disproportionate in size compared to its neighbors or has a

dramatically different architectural style that is not otherwise found within the area. In the past, some such houses and small apartment buildings have been built when ill-planned zoning was allowed to occur. The Sehome Neighborhood community would like to avoid such developments in the future, in order to preserve and maintain the community spirit it presently has.

In accordance with Washington Growth Management Act Planning Goals 11 (Citizen participation and coordination) and 13 (Historic preservation), while continuing to encourage development in accordance with Planning Goal 5 (Economic development), the Sehome Neighborhood Association has adopted the belief that new development should continue to reflect the historic nature of the neighborhood, both to preserve property values for existing units and to sustain an overall economic stimulus by retaining the uniqueness of the neighborhood for the long term.

It is the belief of the Sehome Neighborhood that the use of prototypes in planning will perform a better job than lists of detailed rules in helping developers to create housing units that agree with the values of the Neighborhood and thus contribute to the overall sense of well-being and the economic value of the neighborhood. Early and consistent application of such prototypical planning will eventually lower the cost of development by lowering the amount of bureaucratic review. The loss will be that developers will not be able to use pre-existing plans from units built in other communities which have different contexts, e.g., neighborhoods with a predominance of other styles. Such pre-existing plans may have validity in other communities, but not in Sehome.

The Sehome Neighborhood Association Architectural Design Committee, in seeking input for the Neighborhood Plan, has adopted for 2007 a two-part approach and will continue to work as described below:

- Conduct a study for the Sehome Neighborhood Association that will discover and document the consensus character of the Sehome Neighborhood in architectural detail. The study will be open to participation by any and all Sehome residents and property and business stakeholders, and will be publicized through all outreach methods available to the Sehome Neighborhood Association. The study will use prototype examples to collect and express Neighborhood preferences regarding architectural character of Sehome. The findings of the study will be the basis for a Character of Sehome document, which will be published for review and approval by the Neighborhood at large.
- Apply the findings from the Character of Sehome study to a proposed appendix to the City of Bellingham Multifamily Residential Design Handbook. This appendix will clarify interpretation of the existing guidelines as applied to multi-unit development within Sehome through the same use of prototype examples used in the Character of Sehome study. (The Committee is working with other historic neighborhoods in an effort to make this appendix relevant to all historic neighborhoods in Bellingham.)

This work is ongoing, and the complexity of conducting a thorough and democratic outreach process in this sensitive area has precluded completion of either step at the time of submission of this plan.

Neighborhood Design Objectives (NDOs)

NDO-1: Articulate high standards for architectural design and site planning of new development in Sehome, in a way that is predictable for developers to implement.

- NDO-2: Encourage and, where possible, ensure that development that occurs in Sehome takes form and scale that respect and enhance the historic character of Sehome's heritage.
- NDO-3: Preserve and restore the historic nature and character of the original single-family areas of Sehome.
- NDO-4: Preserve the 1910 National Guard Armory building, as one of Bellingham's most significant historic structures through a redevelopment proposal that honors the architectural and historic significance of the armory while adding value to the community.

Part 3: Prioritized implementation strategy

Neighborhood Design Actions (NDAs)

- NDA-1: Complete Character of Sehome study referred to above, and create and publish the Character of Sehome document.
- NDA-2: Create and submit to the city as a proposed regulatory change the appendix to the Multifamily Residential Design Guidelines referred to above, based on the Character of Sehome document.
- NDA-3: Consistent with LUZASW-2, architectural design standards for the Samish Way Urban Center should be determined through a master planning process with full neighborhood participation.
- NDA-4: The city should support the creation of an Armory Design Review District, as listed below in *Special Armory Review District Neighborhood Design Actions*.
- NDA-5: Prioritize and explore regulatory channels to prevent degradation of existing historic housing stock and remove incentives to neglect such properties. These channels may include but are not limited to ideas such as visual nuisance fines, denial of non-conforming use permits for out-of-character buildings to replace degraded property, etc.
- NDA-6: Explore formation of additional Historic Districts, recognition of individual historic structures in Sehome or expansion of the current Historic District in Sehome.
- NDA-7: Work with the City and other historic neighborhoods to explore the value, scope and mission of a possible design review board that would make recommendations in the event that a neighborhood challenges an interpretation of design guidelines that leads to permitting a development the neighborhood believes does not comply with adopted guidelines.
- NDA-8: The Sehome Neighborhood recommends the use of LEED standards for multi-unit developments. The LEED standards promote environmentally sensitive planning in a cost-effective manner. The Sehome Neighborhood would like the City of Bellingham to approve a requirement of at least a Silver LEED rating for all multi-family and mixed-use units built in Sehome. The LEED standards reflect this new planning concept of working towards a prototype, rather than trying to implement hard-and-fast rules, enabling flexibility while still achieving the goals.

Special Armory Review District Neighborhood Design Actions (NDAs)

- NDARDA-1: The city should create an Armory Design Review District for the Northwest 500 block of N. State Street (Core Area) that includes Sehome Neighborhood Association representation. This includes the Armory Structure, the auxiliary building, and all land within the block.
- NDARDA-2: To come
- NDARDA-3: Design review criteria should emphasize the refurbishment of the main Armory structure within the architectural shell of the main building. All other structures should have a standard that would result in the best design, based on the historical context (the Armory building and/or Craftsman/Bungalow homes) of the area in which the project is located and the policies in the Sehome Neighborhood.
- NDARDA-4: Specific design review approval should be required for the following permits located within the core area:
1. Any construction of a building or structure.
 2. Any addition or exterior alteration to an existing building.
 3. Installation of any exterior sign.
- NDARDA-5: Preferred uses within the core area should include:
1. Western Washington University institutional use that refurbishes the main structure within the architectural shell of main building. Examples include but are not limited to:
 - a. Performing arts
 - b. Athletics
 - c. Office space
 - d. Academic
 - e. Faculty housing
 2. Possible parking structure on auxiliary building site with maximum height not to exceed the elevation (road surface) N. State St.
 3. Non-profit use that refurbishes the main structure within the architectural shell of main building and adds cultural value to the community. The successful refurbishment of the 14th St Fire Station within the Happy Valley Neighborhood is a good example of this type of effort.
 4. Collaboration between public and/or non profit entities that refurbishes the main structure within the architectural shell of main building. Commercial exception for a small store or coffee house may be considered.
 5. If the armory structure is condemned or determined unusable by the City:
 - Public Space: Open space, park or garden for the entire block.
 - Maximum height of any structure, not to exceed the elevation (road surface) of N. State St.

NDARDA-6: The Armory Design Review District criteria should prohibit:

- 1. Demolition of the historical structure for private/condominium development.**
- 2. Development of the auxiliary building site or other site within the Northwest 500 Block of N. State without refurbishing or a binding refurbishment commitment to the main Armory building structure.**

Chapter 8: Parks, Recreation and Open Space

Part 1: Existing (to include critical and natural areas)

The Sehome Neighborhood benefits from proximity to the adjacent Sehome Arboretum, which provides natural area hiking trails and viewpoint opportunities for the whole neighborhood. In addition, two small parks, Laurel Park and Forest & Cedar Park provide some flat grassy playfield areas, and include playground equipment.

A popular pedestrian route to the Neighborhood from the Downtown Core is provided by the Crooked Path, a steep, winding trail that occupies the Laurel Street right-of-way between High and Garden Streets. Not a part of the Bellingham Parks Department, the Crooked Path has been landscaped and is maintained by a volunteer organization.

According to York Neighborhood Association research, at least one-third of Franklin Park (in York) users are from the Sehome Neighborhood. Boulevard Park and the Western Washington University campus provide well-used open space opportunities for Sehome residents.

Arboretum & Area 10

Two separate areas of open space zoned as public land comprise Area 10 of Sehome and abut the Arboretum. These areas are generally treated as part of the Arboretum, as no boundary markers exist on site. They are steep, heavily wooded, and include marked access to the Arboretum trail system at the top of Jersey Street, as well as unmarked access in several other locations.

Laurel Park

Laurel Park is a level, grassed area comprising Area 8. The park includes some playground equipment and basketball courts, and is frequently used by Western Washington University students from the area who toss Frisbees on the grassed area or play basketball.

Forest & Cedar Park

Forest & Cedar Park is mostly level with a steep bank on the uphill side of the park. A new playground structure and swing area was installed in 2005, as well as drainage repair next to the steep incline parallel to the alley. Some clearing was completed on the steep incline near Cedar St. and Pine St.; however, the middle part of the steep incline is still overgrown. The restroom building is open to the public on a seasonal basis and is well maintained.

The fence on the retaining wall next to Forest St. is in poor condition. An access point at the restroom end of the retaining wall on Forest St. would ease pressure on park users bypassing the fence through the bushes.

The field is used for light sport activity and some practices; however, the condition of the turf is bumpy and uneven in places (long rolling bumps that vary 1" - 3" in height).

HVAC noise from Western Washington University's Viking Union is audible in the center portion of the park.

Safety concern: Pick-up games on the field involving hard baseballs pose a hazard when balls clear the fence and fall into traffic and houses on Forest St. Balls have hit cars and houses requiring replacement of windows. (Two known hardball incidents occurred in 2006.)

Part 2: Analysis and Objectives for parks and open space

Eighty percent of the respondents to the 2004 Sehome Survey indicated that there were enough parks in and near the Neighborhood that were easily accessible from their homes. However, additional residential infill will create additional need for parks and open space as well as pressure on existing ones.

The Samish Way Urban Center proposed to provide significant numbers of residential infill units in an urbanized, multistory environment of multi-family housing. Open space is critical to an active public space experience in these environments.

- PRO-1: Significant additional residential infill should be accompanied by supporting open space and parks within close proximity of the development to minimize automotive traffic and parking requirements for new and existing parks.
- PRO-2: Existing parks and open space should be maintained at or above their current level of maintenance.

Part 3: Prioritized implementation strategy

- PRA-1: Portions of Area 10 that are outside the Western Washington University Institutional Master Plan Districts 1 and 2 should remain treated as a natural area matching management policies for the Arboretum in perpetuity.
- PRA-2: The Samish Way Urban Center master plan should include open space and pocket parks that can be programmed to encourage a vibrant public space in that area, including a play area safely removed from traffic and a dog park to encourage family investment in the residential component of the Urban Center.
- PRA-3: If the St. Joseph's parking lot area is developed to or near its full zoned potential for infill, some open area such as a pocket park should be included in the development.
- PRA-4: The City and the Neighborhood should explore possible use of unused city right of ways between the residential areas of Sehome and the Samish Way Urban Center for a bicycle/pedestrian only causeway to access the Urban Center.
- PRA-5: The Neighborhood recommends banning hardball in Forest & Cedar Park, due to safety issues, and encouraging other sports to orient playing fields to minimize the chance of objects clearing the fence to Forest St.
- PRA-6: The City should consider re-leveling and planting the Forest & Cedar Park to be adequate for most organized sport use.
- PRA-7: Signage should be provided for the Crooked Path between High and Garden Streets to foster pedestrian access between the Sehome Neighborhood and the Downtown Core.
- PRA-8: The City should provide an access point at the end of the retaining wall on Forest St. (near the Forest and Cedar Park restroom) to enable park users to bypass the fence.

PRA-9: The city should work with Western Washington University to find ways to mitigate HVAC noise at Forest & Cedar Park.

Appendices

Design Standards Policy [probably not in time for this update; supported by process and language in Chapter 7]

LEED-NC (New Construction)

<http://www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CMSPageID=220>

LEED-Housing

<http://www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CMSPageID=147>

LEED-Neighborhood Development

<http://www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CMSPageID=148>

Appendix A: Land use percentages (approximate)

Figures are square feet, approximated by measuring area on the Sehome Neighborhood Zoning map using ImageJ software (<http://rsb.info.nih.gov/ij/>). Figures are for approximating relative percentages of land use only, and should not be used in conjunction with official GIS measurements or for any other purpose.

Total approx SF	13,395,306	% of total	% of developable	% of residential
Area 6	95,535			
Area 8	111,255			
Area10a	922,331			
Area 10b	171,536			
Area 13	36,472			
Total Public	1,337,129	9.98	11.09	
Total Developable land	12,058,177	90.02		
Area 3	126,021			
Area 4	452,650			
Area 16	1,683,479			
Total Commercial	2,262,150	16.89	18.76	
Area 11	2,225,035			
Area 14	1,791,656			
Total Single-Family	4,016,691	29.99	33.31	41.00
Total Multi-Family*	5,779,336	43.14	47.93	59.00
*As calculated by total minus all other types				
Total Residential	9,796,027	73.13	81.24	100.00

Maps

Appended are three maps:

Zoning Map of Sehome Neighborhood.

Land Use Map of Sehome Neighborhood.

Circulation Map overlay on Land Use Map.

